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CODE BLUE

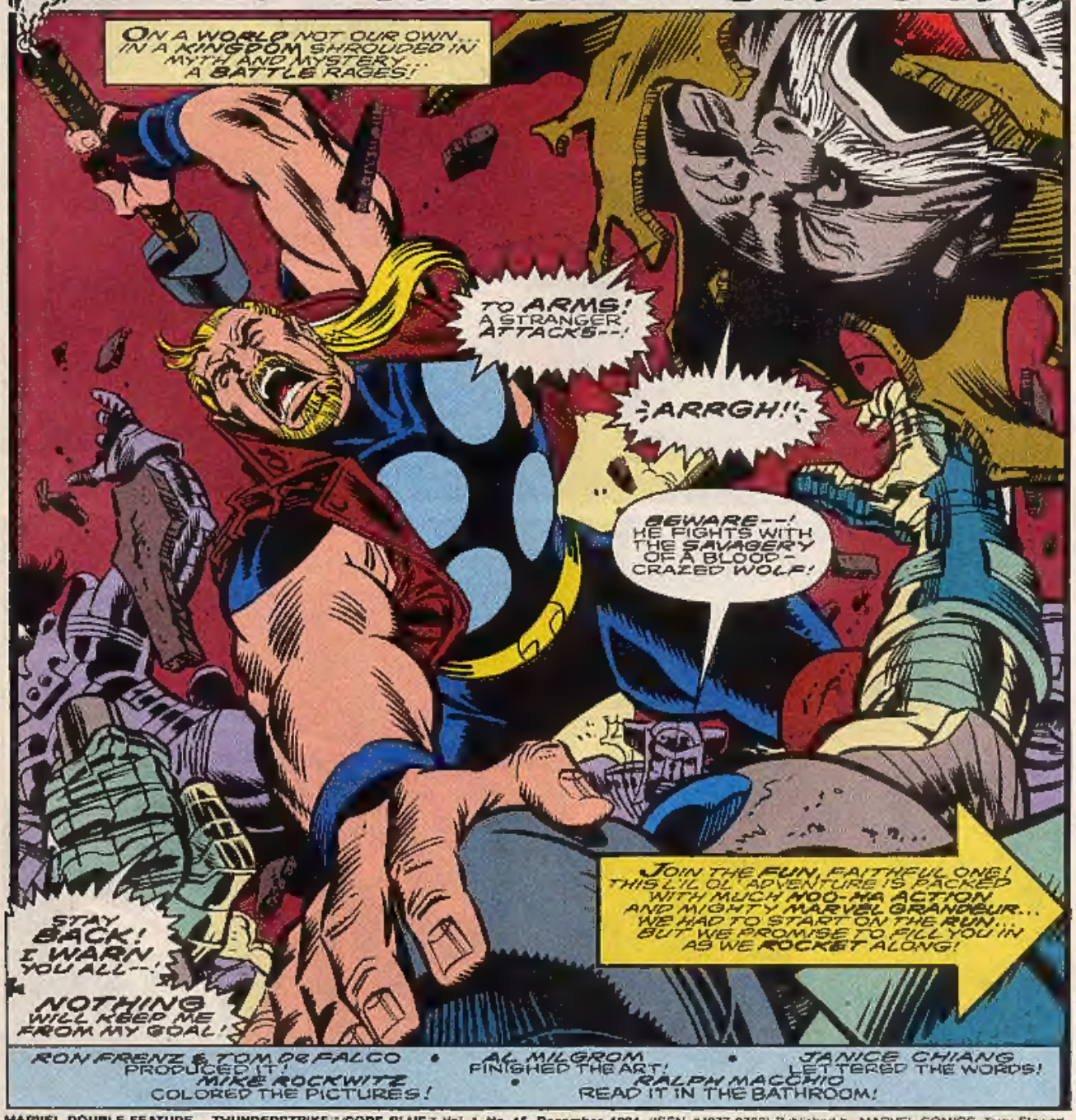
THUNDERSTRIKE

WHEN ARCHITECT ERIC MASTERSON STAMPS HIS WOODEN WALKING STICK UPON THE GROUND, IT IS TRANSFORMED INTO A MYSTICAL WEAPON CALLED THUNDERSTRIKE! ARMED WITH INCREDIBLE POWERS, MASTERSON WORKS TO PROVE THAT ONE MAN MUST MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BECAUSE THIS WORLD STILL NEEDS HEROES! STAN LEE PRESENTS ...

THUNDERSTRIKE!

TO SO SAVE HIS SON, ERIC MUST SOLVE THE MIND-STAGGERING SECRET BEHIND...

THE OLD BAIT AND SWITCH!



RON FRENZ & TOM DE FALCO PRODUCED IT! • AL MILGROM FINISHED THE ART! • JANICE CHIANG LETTERED THE WORDS! MIKE ROCKWITZ COLORED THE PICTURES! • RALPH MACCHIO READ IT IN THE BATHROOM!

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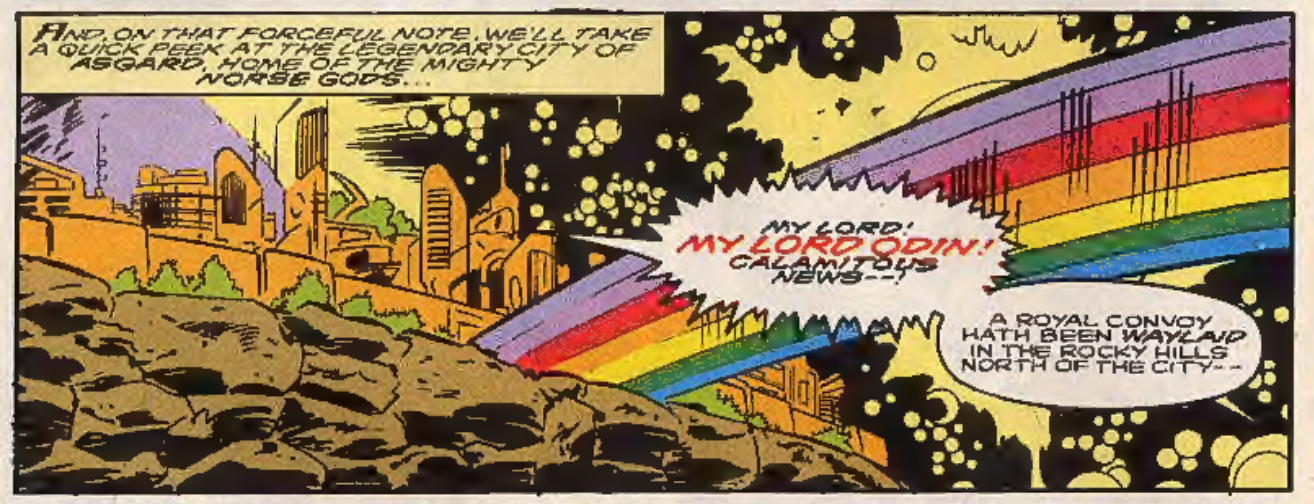
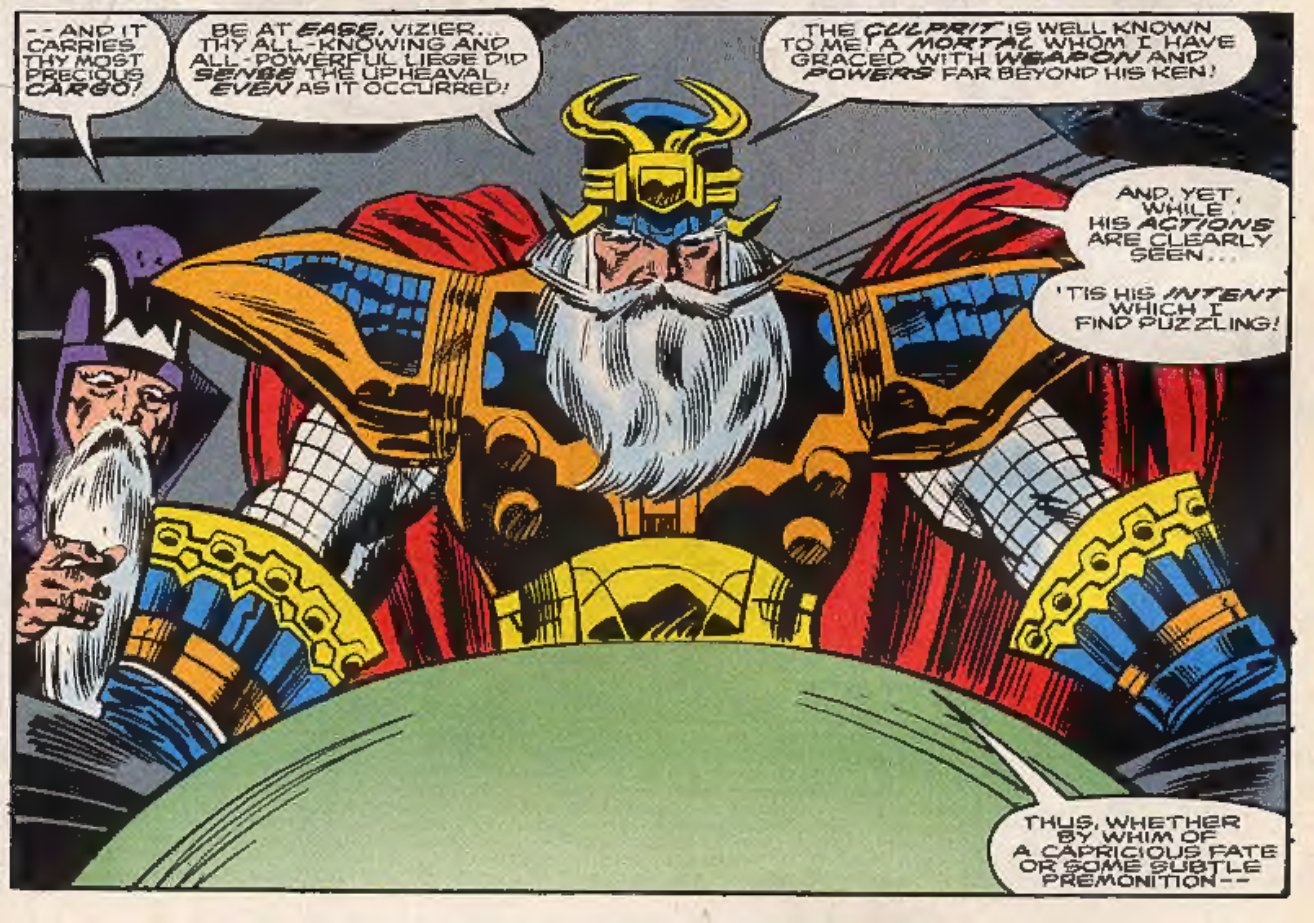
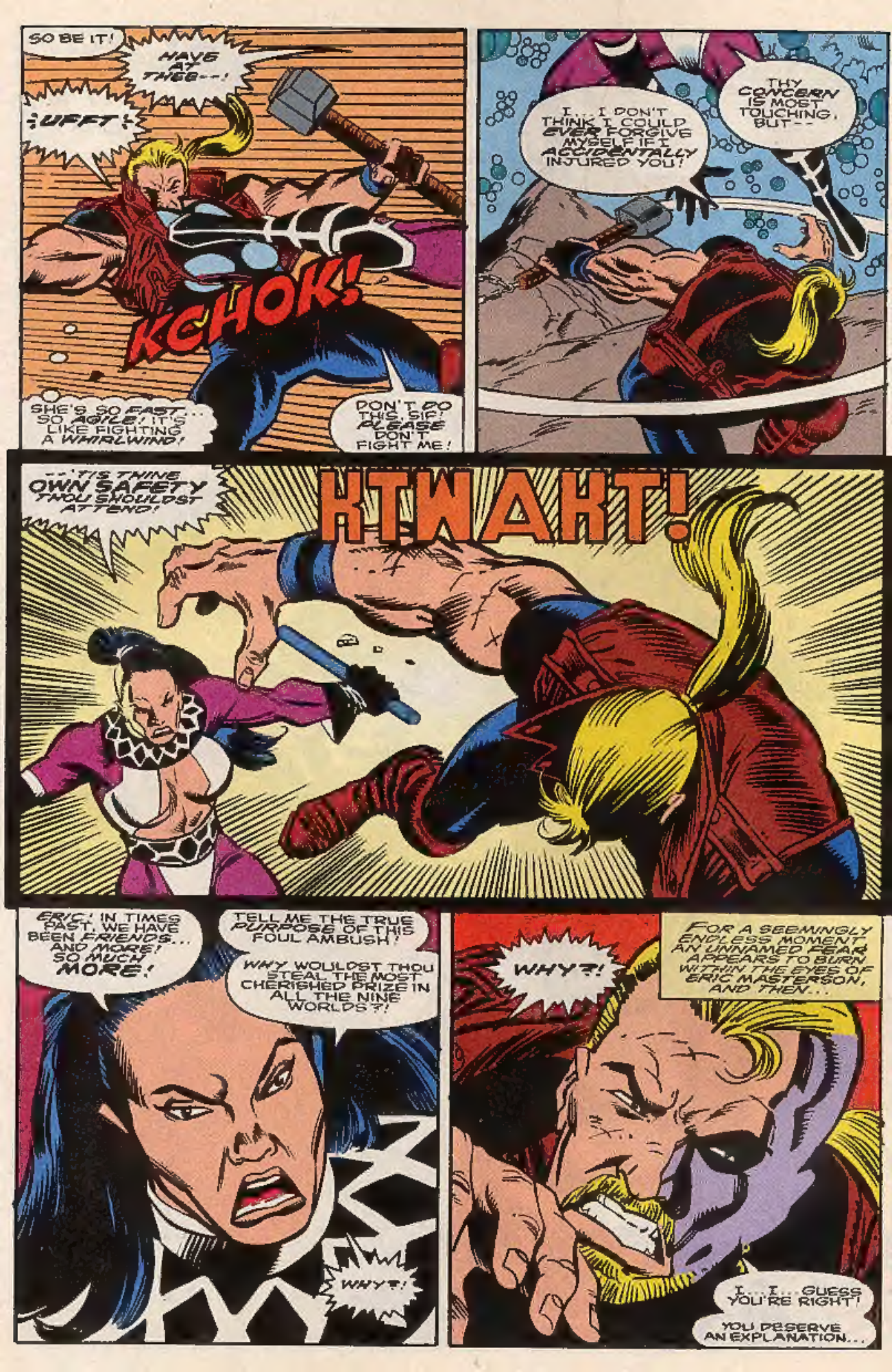
NOTHING CAN STOP ME!
NOTHING AND NO ONE!
PWA-KWOOM!


AND, ON THAT FORCEFUL NOTE, WE'LL TAKE A QUICK PEEK AT THE LEGENDARY CITY OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS...
MY LORD! MY LORD ODIN! CALAMITOUS NEWS--!
A ROYAL CONVOY HATH BEEN WAYLAID IN THE ROCKY HILLS NORTH OF THE CITY--


--AND IT CARRIES THY MOST PRECIOUS CARGO!
BE AT EASE, VIZIER... THY ALL-KNOWING AND ALL-POWERFUL LIEGE DID SENSE THE UPHEAVAL EVEN AS IT OCCURRED!
THE CULPRIT IS WELL KNOWN TO ME! A MORTAL WHOM I HAVE GRACED WITH WEAPON AND POWERS FAR BEYOND HIS KEN!
AND, YET, WHILE HIS ACTIONS ARE CLEARLY SEEN...
'TIS HIS INTENT WHICH I FIND PUZZLING!
THUS, WHETHER BY WHIM OF A CAPRICIOUS FATE OR SOME SUBTLE PREMONITION--

"--WELL CHOSEN BE THE SPECIAL GUARDIAN OF YON CARAVAN!"
SORRY ABOUT THIS, GUYS!
BELIEVE ME...
I HONESTLY TRIED TO GO AS EASY ON YOU AS I COULD!
A NOBLE SENTIMENT, MORTAL...
SUCH A PITY THAT I WILL NOT BE SO RESTRAINED!
NO! NOT YOU--!
NOT YOU!
IS IT THE SIGHT OF THE LADY SIF WHICH SO STARTLES THEE, ERIC MASTERSON?
OR, DOES SOME NEW MADNESS ASSAIL THEE?!
'TIS NOT MY WILL TO HARM THEE... BUT... NEVER SHALL I RELINQUISH MY CHARGE! THY MORTAL MIND CANNOT CONCEIVE HOW PRECIOUS... HOW TRULY IRREPLACEABLE... BE THIS TREASURE!
FOR THE SAKE OF ALL I LOVE... FOR THE SAFETY OF ASGARD ITSELF... I IMPLORE THEE TO LAY DOWN THY WEAPON! I BESEECH THEE TO SURRENDER!
I... I'M SO SORRY... BUT I CAN'T! I CAN'T!


SO BE IT!
HAVE AT THEE--!
UFFT!
KCHOK!
SHE'S SO FAST... SO AGILE! IT'S LIKE FIGHTING A WHIRLWIND!
DON'T DO THIS, SIF! PLEASE DON'T FIGHT ME!
I... I DON'T THINK I COULD EVER FORGIVE MYSELF IF I ACCIDENTALLY INJURED YOU!
THY CONCERN IS MOST TOUCHING, BUT--
--IT'S THINE OWN SAFETY THOU SHOULDST ATTEND!
KTWAKT!
ERIC! IN TIMES PAST, WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS... AND MORE! SO MUCH MORE!
TELL ME THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THIS FOUL AMBUSH!
WHY WOULDST THOU STEAL THE MOST CHERISHED PRIZE IN ALL THE NINE WORLDS?!
WHY?!
WHY?!
FOR A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MOMENT, AN UNNAMED FEAR APPEARS TO BURN WITHIN THE EYES OF ERIC MASTERSON, AND THEN...
I... I... GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT!
YOU DESERVE AN EXPLANATION...

"THIS ALL STARTED A FEW HOURS... OR WAS IT DAYS?... AGO.

"I HAD JUST DROPPED IN TO VISIT MY EX-WIFE WHEN I GOT MY FIRST SHOCK OF THE DAY...

"LEAH PRINCESS WAS NOW WORKING AS AN INSTRUCTOR IN MARCY'S MAIN HEALTH CLUB!

"THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BORE YOU WITH LEAH'S HISTORY, OR OUR RELATIONSHIP. LET'S JUST SAY I WAS NOT AMUSED.

"UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN BEFORE I COULD CONFRONT LEAH, MARCY SNAGGED ME, AND..."

MY HEALTH CLUBS NEED A NEW SPOKESMAN.

AW, MARCY... WE ALREADY HAD THIS CONVERSATION!

I WANT YOUR HELP TO SIGN THUNDERSTRIKE!

THIS GUY'S AN AVENGER! HE WON'T PLAY ANYBODY'S PITCHMAN!

HE HAS NO CHOICE!

IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, THAT JERK BROKE INTO MY HOME RECENTLY!*

HE COMES THROUGH FOR ME... OR HE GOES TO COURT!

"I WAS JUST ABOUT TO ASK WHAT MORE COULD GO WRONG WHEN--

*SEE ISSUE #8 FOR DETAILS, AS WELL AS A GOOD READ. --RALF!

RIING!

"--A PHONE CALL FROM MY SON'S SCHOOL REMINDED ME WHY CERTAIN QUESTIONS SHOULD NEVER BE ASKED."

OH, NO!

NO!!

"KEVIN HAD COLLAPSED IN THE SCHOOLYARD!

"HE HAD FALLEN INTO A COMA--

"--AND DR. GARY PARETSKY WAS UNABLE TO DETECT ANY MEDICAL CAUSE.

"WE WERE SOON JOINED BY BOBBY STEELE, MARCY'S NEW HUBBY...AND SUSAN AUSTIN, KEVIN'S AU PAIR.

"FRANTIC WITH WORRY, I HEADED TO THE HOSPITAL ROOF FOR SOME FRESH AIR...

"BUT, I WASN'T ALONE FOR LONG!

"REACTING INSTINCTIVELY, I QUICKLY INTRODUCED MY ENCHANTED WALKING STICK TO THE GROUND...

"AND THAT'S WHEN I CAUGHT A WHIFF OF A STRANGELY FAMILIAR SCENT...

"THE UNMISTAKABLE ODOR OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE!"

HAVE NO FEAR, MORTAL! THOUGH THE LORD OF DARKNESS COULD EASILY ERASE YOU WITH A THOUGHT...

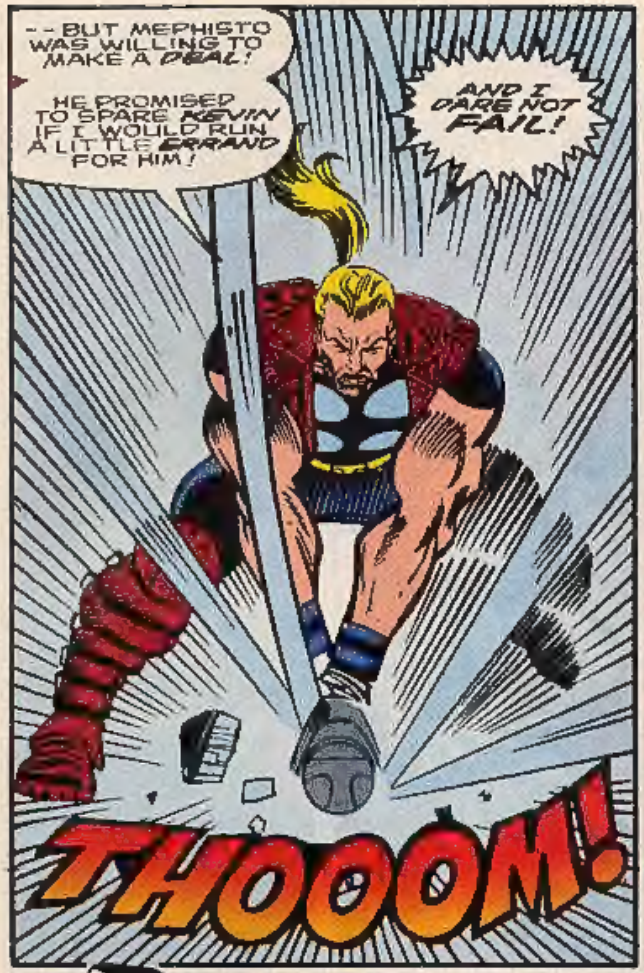
YOU ARE SAFE...FOR THE MOMENT!

MEPHISTO!

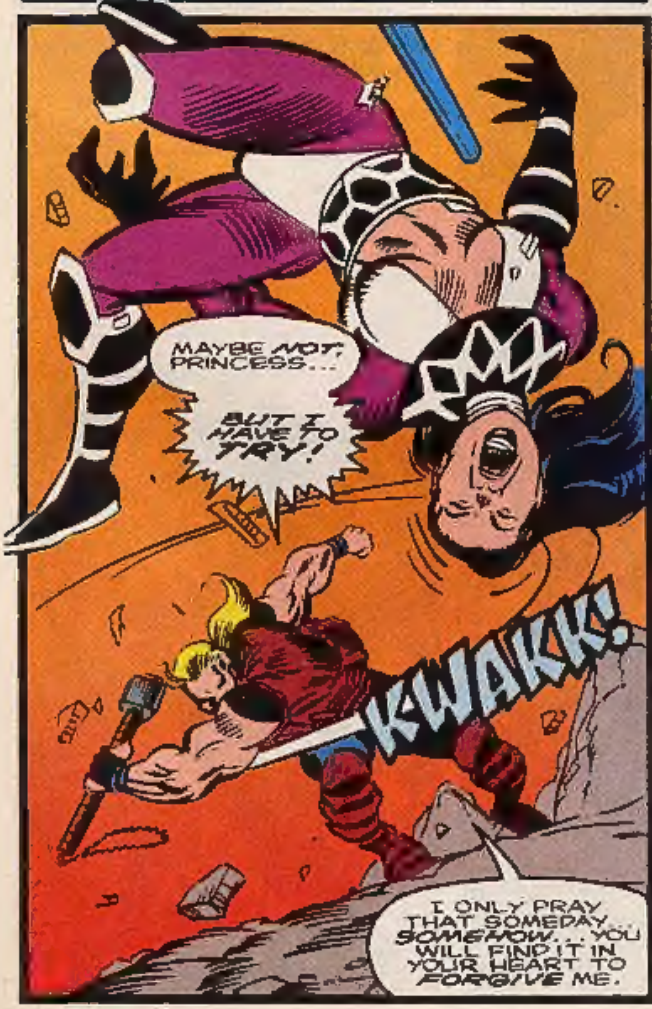
NONE BUT I CAN SAVE YOUR SON!

ONLY I CAN RESTORE HIS LIFE!

"DON'T ASK ME THE DETAILS, BUT THAT DEVIL HAD SOMEHOW MANAGED TO CON MY KID OUT OF HIS SOUL--"


--BUT MEPHISTO WAS WILLING TO MAKE A DEAL!
HE PROMISED TO SPARE KEVIN IF I WOULD RUN A LITTLE ERRAND FOR HIM!
AND I DARE NOT FAIL!
THOOOM!

DON'T BE A FOOL, ERIC!
NO HUMAN MIND CAN TRULY FATHOM THE TWISTED SCHEMES OF MEPHISTO!
NOR CANST THOU HOPE TO BEST HIM IN A BARGAIN!


MAYBE NOT, PRINCESS...
BUT I HAVE TO TRY!
KWAKK!
I ONLY PRAY THAT SOMEDAY... SOMEHOW... YOU WILL FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO FORGIVE ME.

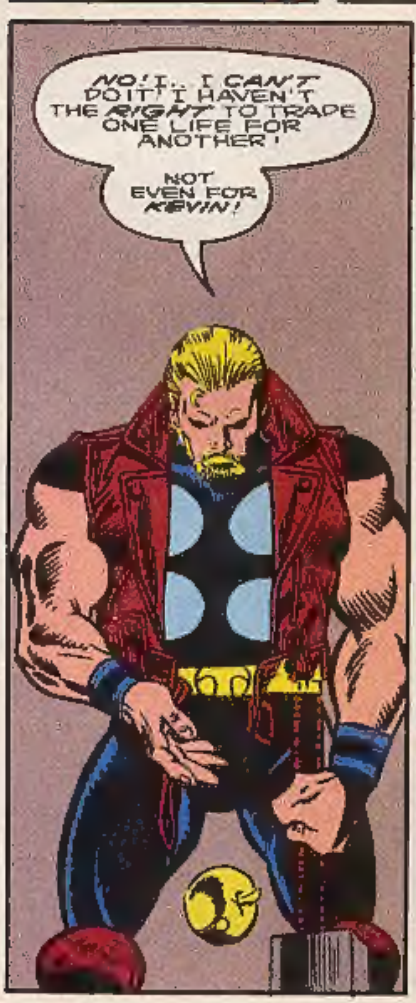
THERE! LYING ON THE GROUND--!
IT'S WHAT I'VE COME SO FAR TO ACQUIRE!

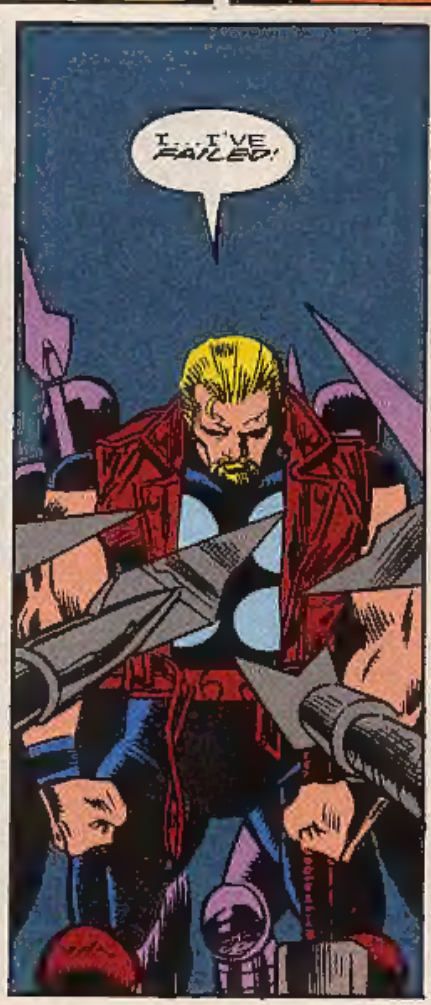
THIS IS IT! I ONLY NEED ONE OF THESE BABIES TO SAVE KEVIN!
MEPHISTO AGREED TO RETURN HIS SOUL IN EXCHANGE FOR--

-ONE OF THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IDUNN!
ACCORDING TO LEGEND THEY SOMEHOW GRANT THE ASGARDIANS THEIR IMMORTALITY!
BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL!

IF I TAKE THIS APPLE... AN ASGARDIAN WILL LOSE HIS IMMORTALITY... WITHER AND DIE!
I MUST BALANCE A FACELESS ASGARDIAN AGAINST THE LIFE OF MY SON!

HOW DO I KNOW HE'S SOMEONE FACELESS?! IT MIGHT BE HEIMDALL... ANY OF THE WARRIORS THREE... OR EVEN THOR HIMSELF!
IT COULD EVEN BE THE ONE WHO FAILED TO STOP ME... THE LADY SIF!


NO! I.. I CAN'T DO IT! I HAVEN'T THE RIGHT TO TRADE ONE LIFE FOR ANOTHER!
NOT EVEN FOR KEVIN!


I... I'VE FAILED!

SHEATHE THY WEAPONS!
THE BATTLE IS ENDED! THE FIGHT IS OVER!
ALREADY IS THIS MORTAL WRACKED BY GUILT AND ANGUISH!
ONLY ODIN THE ALMIGHTY CAN DECREE HIS FINAL FATE!

EVEN AS OUR HERO IS ESCORTED TO THE GLEAMING CITY OF ASGARD.

WE SHALL JOURNEY TO A LOATHSOME REALM WHICH LIES BURIED BENEATH EVERY DARK DEED, EVERY EVIL THOUGHT!

MASTER! MASTER! YOUR PLAN HAS FAILED!

THE MORTAL DID NOT SECURE A GOLDEN APPLE!

BE SILENT, YOU COWERING CUR!

DEVIOUS AND INTRICATE ARE THE WAYS OF MEPHISTO! MASTERSON'S OWN SOUL WOULD HAVE SURELY BEEN FORFEIT IF HE HAD DONE MY BIDDING.

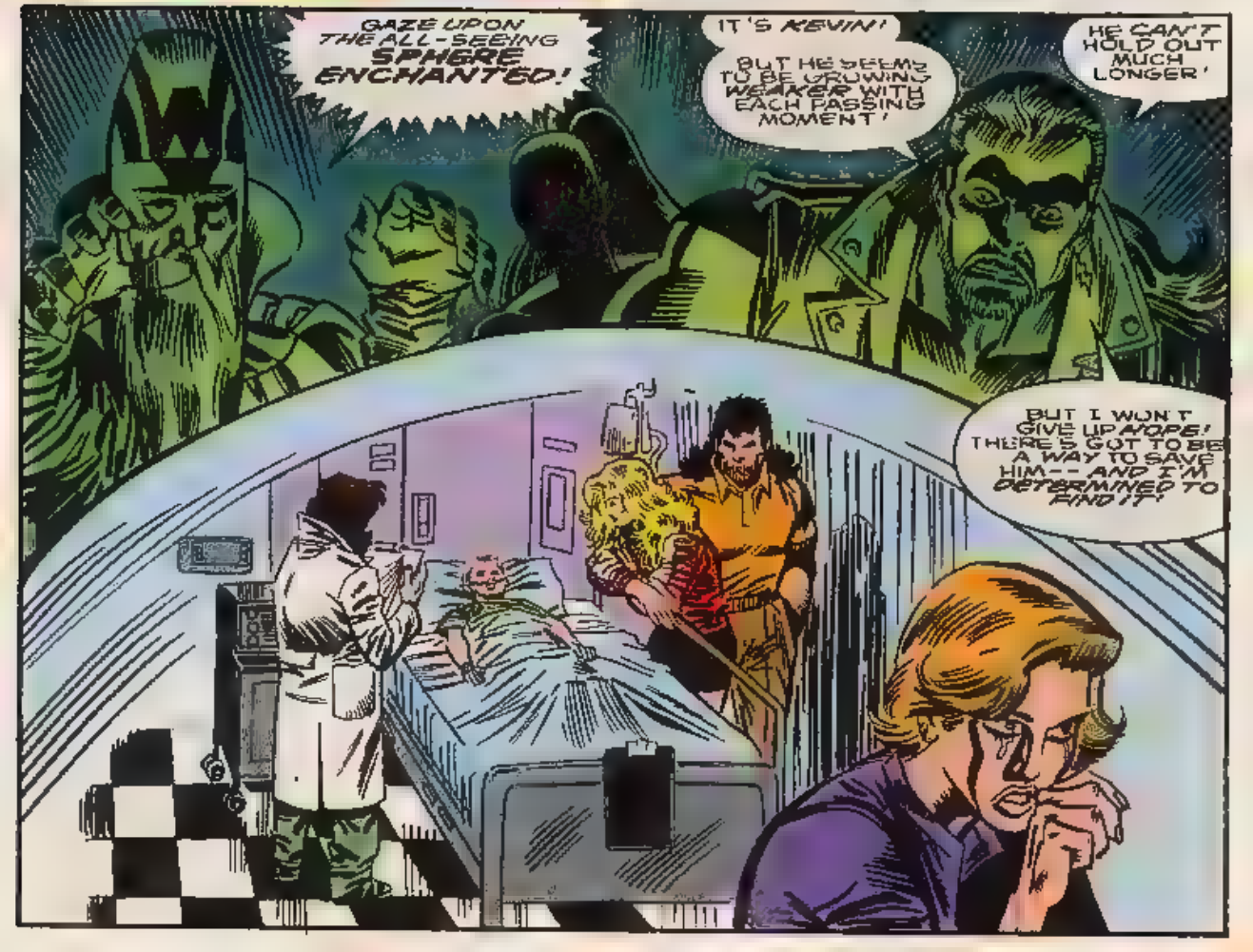
BUT THE APPLE WAS ONLY A PRETENSE TO MASK MY TRUE PRIZE!

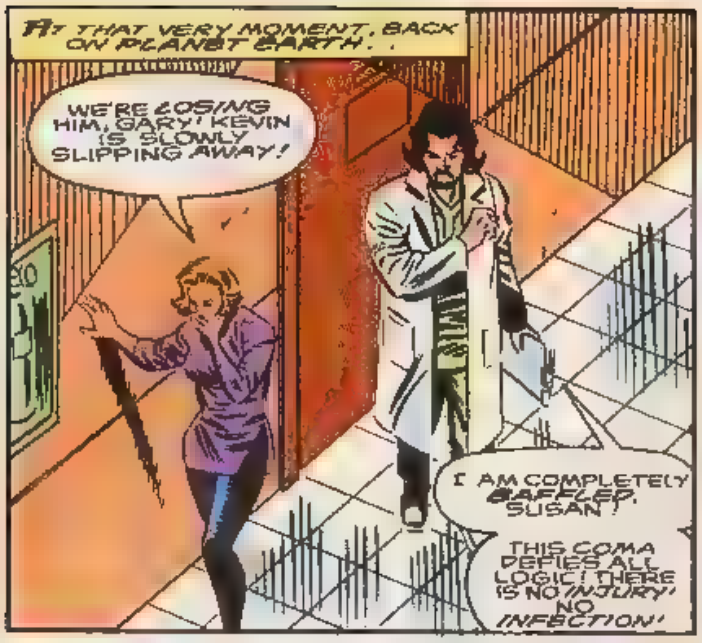
PREPARE THE MYSTIC VAPORS! THE VICTORY I DESIRE IS CLOSE AT HAND!

THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO SUMMON ANOTHER!

MEANWHILE, AT THE PALACE ROYAL
BY THY LEAVE, VIZIER
THE LADY SIF PETITIONS A MOST CRUCIAL AUDIENCE WITH OUR NOBLE LIEGE!

WOULD THAT I COULD GRANT THIS URGENT REQUEST, MILADY...
ALAS, HE WHO IS THE BE-ALL AND END-ALL HATH EMBARKED UPON SOME SECRET QUEST!
WHERE'D HE GO? WHEN IS HE EXPECTED BACK?
I KNOW NOT!
MY SON'S LIFE IS AT STAKE! HE COULD BE DYING AT THIS VERY MOMENT!
IF IT IS KNOWLEDGE OF THY SON'S HEALTH THAT THOU DOTH CRAVE.

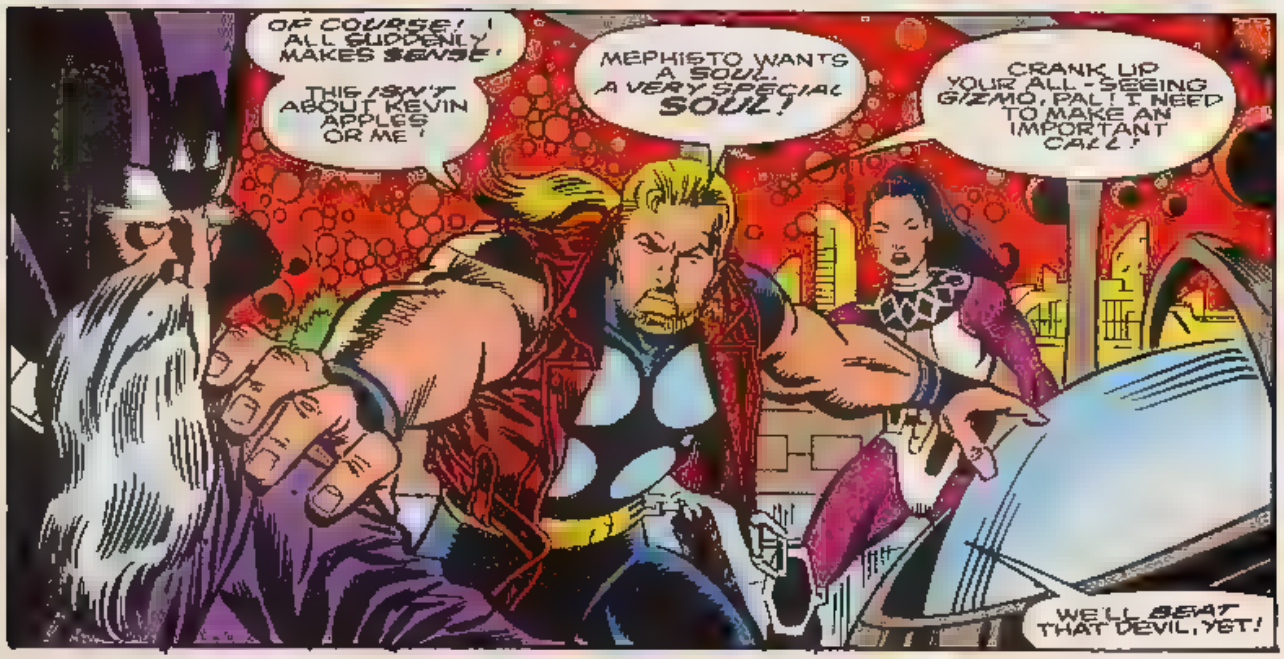

GAZE UPON THE ALL-SEEING SPHERE ENCHANTED!
IT'S KEVIN!
BUT HE SEEMS TO BE GROWING WEAKER WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT!
HE CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER!
BUT I WON'T GIVE UP HOPE! THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO SAVE HIM--AND I'M DETERMINED TO FIND IT!


AT THAT VERY MOMENT, BACK ON PLANET EARTH...
WE'RE LOSING HIM, GARY! KEVIN IS SLOWLY SLIPPING AWAY!
I AM COMPLETELY BAFFLED, SUSAN!
THIS COMA DEFIES ALL LOGIC! THERE IS NO INJURY! NO INFECTION!

I HAVE FOLLOWED EVERY ESTABLISHED MEDICAL PROCEDURE EMPLOYED THE VAST RESOURCES OF THIS ENTIRE MEDICAL CENTER... AND IT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH!

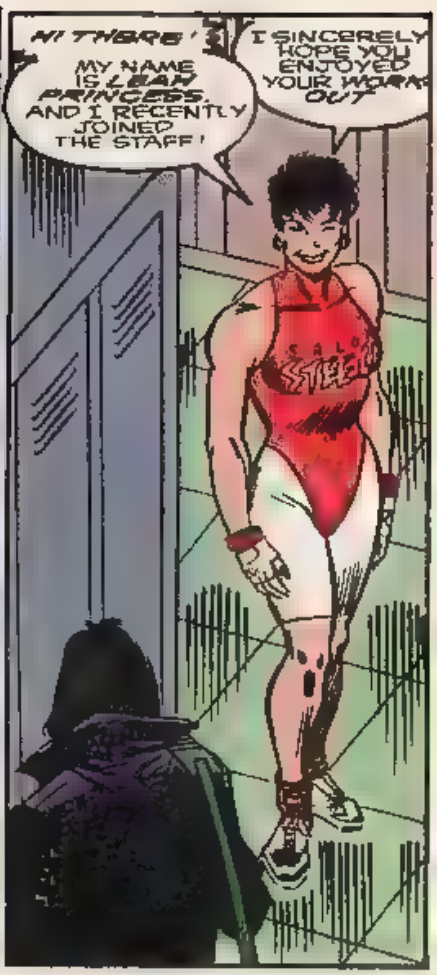
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
PARETSKY IS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SUSAN'S CURRENT EMOTIONAL STATE TO BEAT MY TIME!
MARK MY WORDS, A CONFRONTATION WITH ED MARRERO IS THE LAST THING THE DOCTOR WANTED TO ORDER!

MEANWHILE
MEPHISTO OBVIOUSLY AFFLICTED THE CHILD FOR SOME GREATER PURPOSE, AND YET...
WHAT BENEFIT COULD HE GAIN BY STEALING A GOLDEN APPLE?
WHO KNOWS? WHO CARES? MAYBE HE JUST


OF COURSE! ALL SUDDENLY MAKES SENSE!
THIS ISN'T ABOUT KEVIN APPLES OR ME!
MEPHISTO WANTS A SOUL... A VERY SPECIAL SOUL!
CRANK UP YOUR ALL-SEEING GIZMO, PAL! I NEED TO MAKE AN IMPORTANT CALL!
WE'LL BEAT THAT DEVIL, YET!

EVEN AS ERIC SPRINGS INTO ACTION, WE'LL TAKE A MOMENT TO BREFLY RETURN TO THE MORTAL PLANE--
--AS A LONE FIGURE QUIETLY ALMOST FURTIVELY ENTERS A DESERTED LOCKER ROOM!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO KEVIN MASTERSON ISN'T RIGHT!
IT ISN'T FAIR!

I HATE TO SEE ANY INNOCENT CHILD SUFFER! THEY SHOULD BE CHERISHED--
--AND THEY MUST BE PROTECTED!
WAIT! I HEAR SOMEONE COMING--!

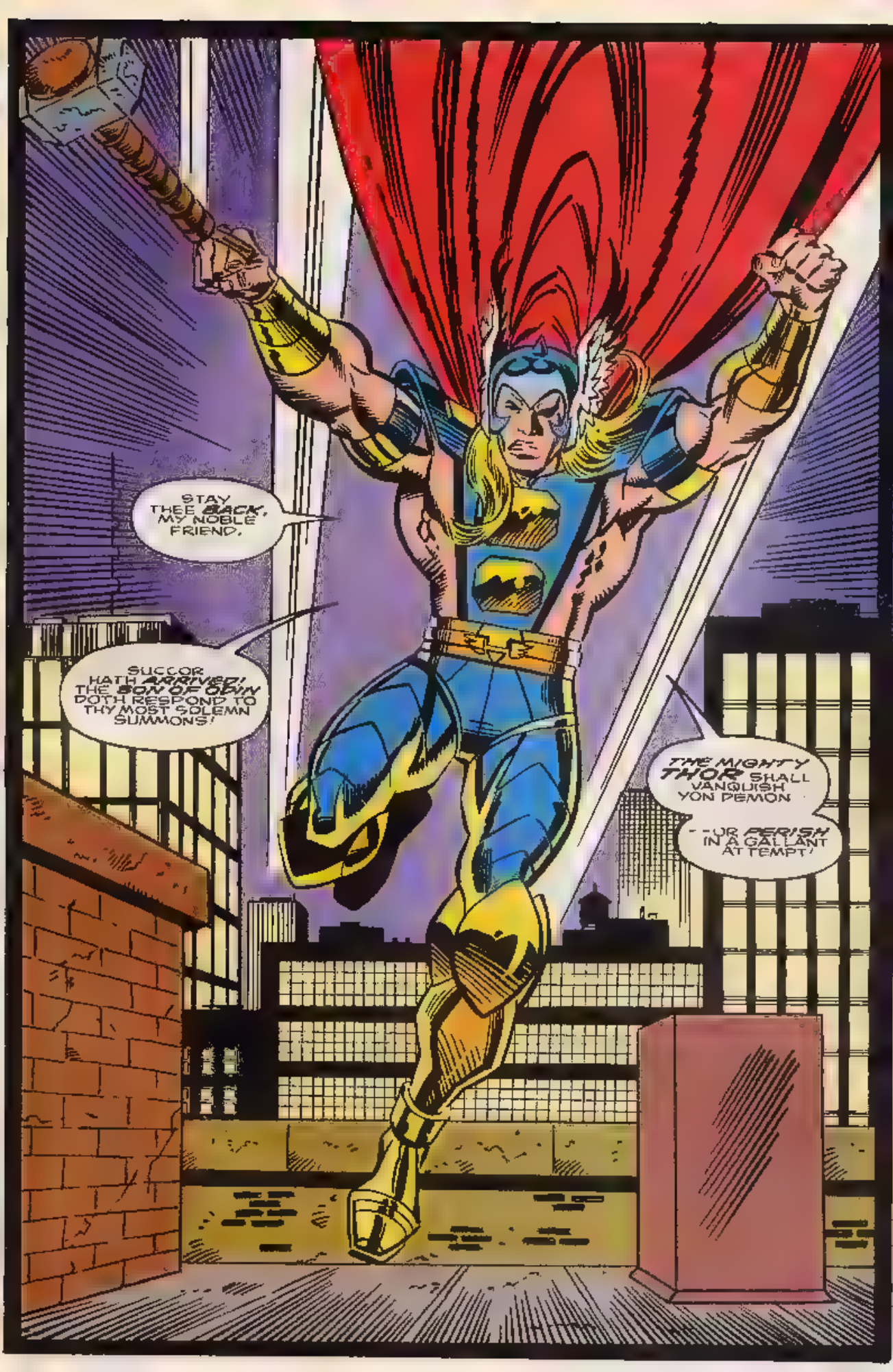

HI THERE!
MY NAME IS LEAH PRINCESS, AND I RECENTLY JOINED THE STAFF!
I SINCERELY HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR WORKOUT

YOU'RE JACKIE LUKUS, AREN'T YOU?
WHY, YES
DO I KNOW YOU?
NOT REALLY!

I NOTICED YOUR NAME ON THE SIGN IN SHEET... AND WANTED TO INTRODUCE MYSELF!
WE HAVE A MUTUAL FRIEND!
ERIC MENTIONS YOU QUITE OFTEN!
ERIC--? YOU MEAN ERIC MASTERSON?

YES... I'M HIS NEW ROOMMATE!

AND, JUST THEN
I MUST RETURN TO THE HOSPITAL WHERE THIS ALL BEGAN
HE WAS UNABLE TO JOIN ME BECAUSE ODIN RECENTLY MADE EARTH OFF-LIMITS TO HIS SUBJECTS!
BUT IF I KNOW A CERTAIN RED FACE! FREAKO, I WON'T HAVE A LONG WAIT AHEAD OF ME!
STILL YOUR TAUNTING TONGUE, MORTAL!
DO NOT PRESUME TO MOCK THE PRINCE OF THE ETYMIAN DEPTHS WHILST YOUR ONLY GOD IS STILL MY THRALL!
YOU RETURN EMPTY-HANDED! YOU HAVE NO GOLDEN APPLE!
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER FOR HIS SALVATION NOTHING TO PREVENT ME FROM CONSIGNING HIM TO DARKNESS ETERNAL!
I CAN OFFER ONE LIFE, ONE SOUL, IN EXCHANGE!
TAKE ME! TAKE ME!
NO, ERIC!
NO!


STAY THEE BACK, MY NOBLE FRIEND.
SUCCOR HATH ARRIVED! THE SON OF ODIN DOTH RESPOND TO THY MOST SOLEMN SUMMONS!
THE MIGHTY THOR SHALL VANQUISH YON DEMON
--OR PERISH IN A GALLANT ATTEMPT!

I GIVE THEE FAIR WARNING, MEPHISTO ..! TAKE THY *LEAVE!* DEPART THIS MORTAL VEIL

E'RE THOU DOST INCUR MY FEARSOME *WRATH!*

WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE, THOR?

'F *THOU* DIDST NOT CALL... THEN *WHO?!*

'TWAS *I* WHO SUMMONED YOU, THUNDER GOD!

BEHOLD! I HOLD A SIGNED CONTRACT!

THE SOUL OF YOUNG *KEVIN MASTERSON* IS MINE TO CLAIM!

I HAD HOPED TO ADD HIS *FATHER* TO THE MIX

IT WAS MY INTENTION TO TRADE THEM *BOTH* FOR SOMETHING... MORE *GODLY*, SHALL WE SAY!

SO! THY TRUE PLAN IS *REVEALED!* FOR CENTURIES BEYOND NUMBER THOU HAST SOUGHT THE SOUL OF *THOR!*

TRUE, BUT MEPHISTO IS *PATIENCE PERSONIFIED!* I AM CONTENT TO *WAIT* A FEW CENTURIES MORE

-- WHILE THE *CHILD* ENJOYS MY WARM HOSPITALITY!

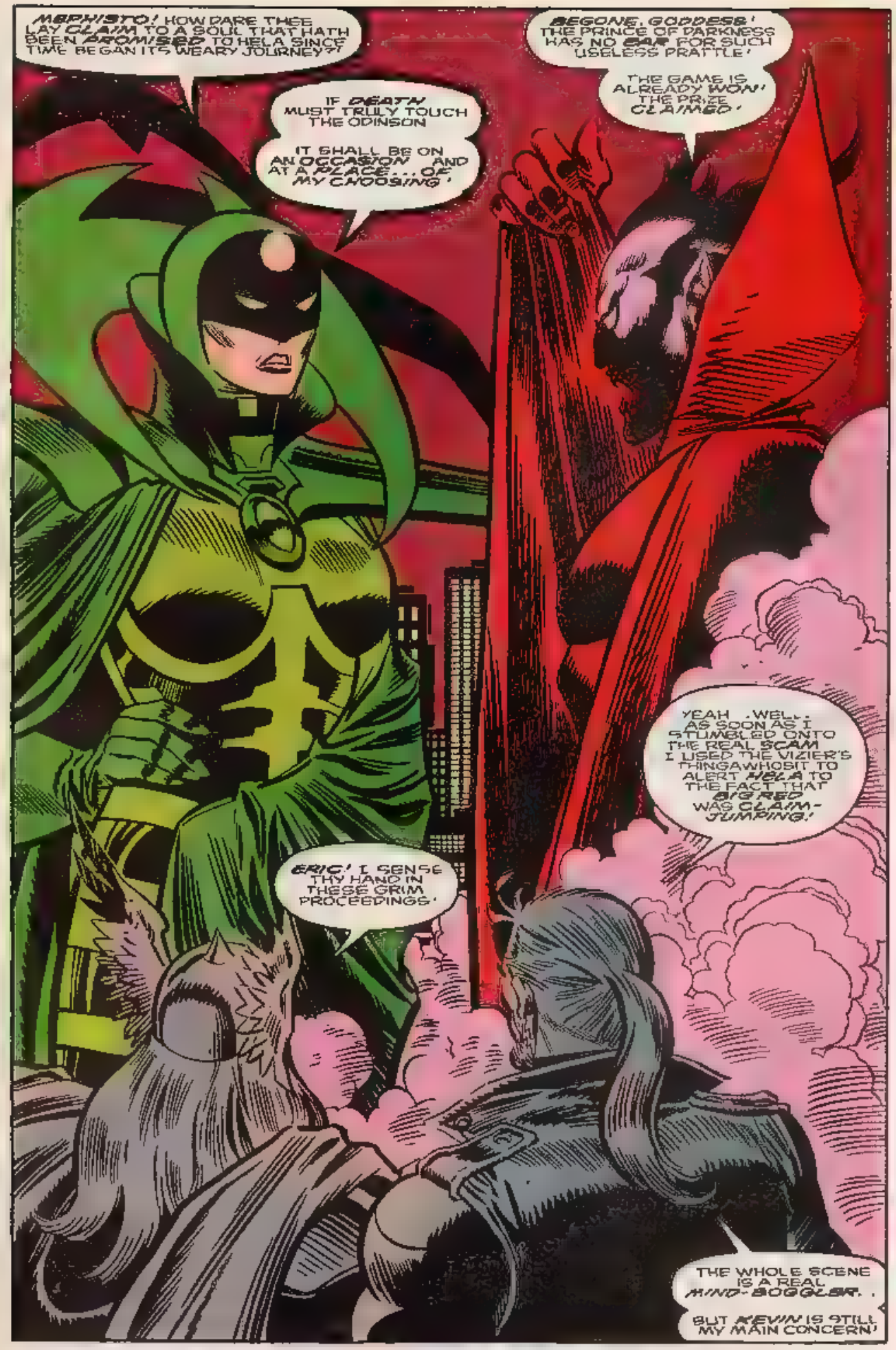
THAT MUST NOT BE! FOR THE SAKE OF THE BOY, *THOR* SHALL PLEDGE HIS VERY--

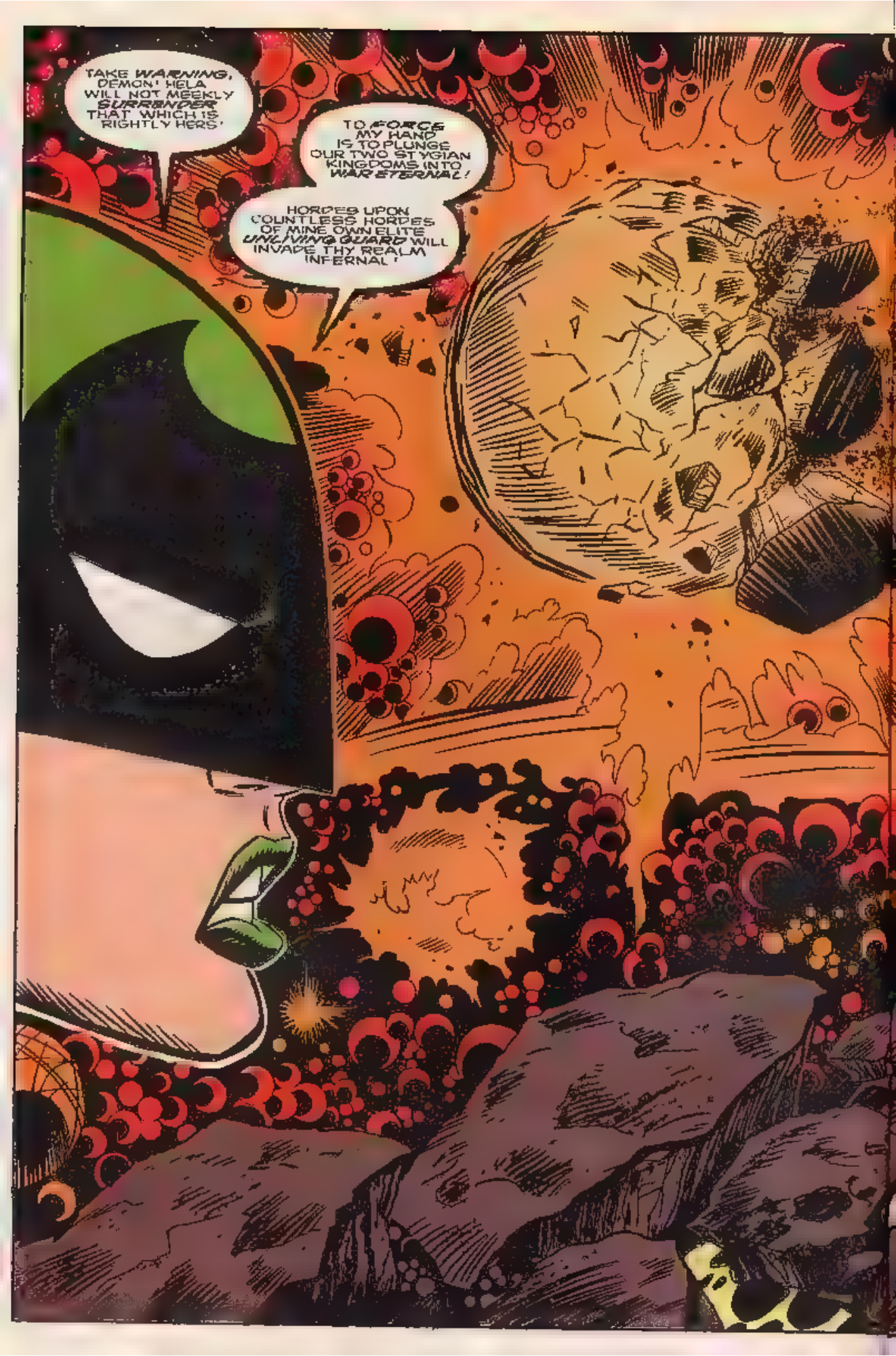
WHOA, BUDDY! NOBODY HAS TO PLEDGE ANYTHING!

WE'RE ALL IN THE CLEAR NOW THAT *MEPHISTO* HAS TIPPED HIS HAND!

YOU SEE, WE'VE GOT A SECRET *ACE* IN THE HOLE

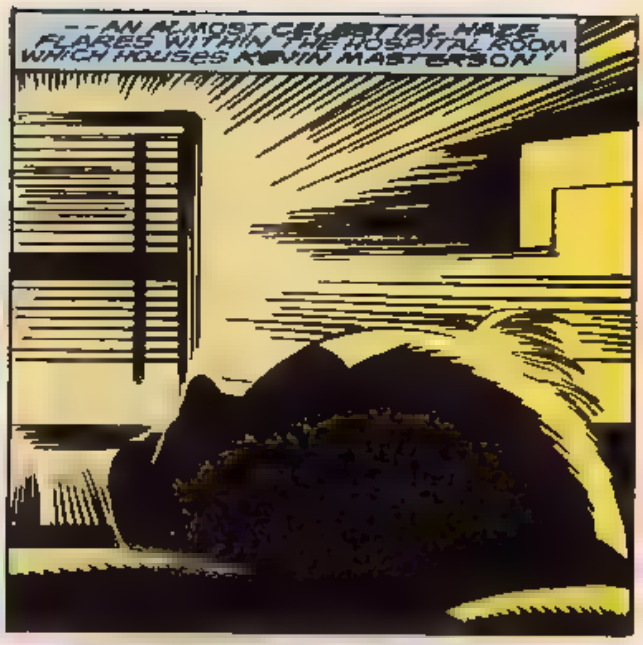
A VERY DEEP HOLE!
'TIS HELA, GODDESS OF DEATH!
BUT HOW HOW CAME SHE HERE?
I GO WHERE I WILL, THUNDER GOD!
NONE MAY COMMAND DEATH! NONE MAY OSTER HER!
NOT EVEN THY MOST SOVEREIGN SIRE!


MEPHISTO! HOW DARE THEE LAY CLAIM TO A SOUL THAT HATH BEEN PROMISED TO HELA SINCE TIME BEGAN ITS WEARY JOURNEY?!
IF DEATH MUST TRULY TOUCH THE ODINSON
IT SHALL BE ON AN OCCASION AND AT A PLACE... OF MY CHOOSING!
BEGONE, GODDESS! THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS HAS NO EAR FOR SUCH USELESS PRATTLE!
THE GAME IS ALREADY WON! THE PRIZE CLAIMED!
YEAH... WELL... AS SOON AS I STUMBLED ONTO THE REAL SCAM I USED THE VIZIER'S THINGAWHOSIT TO ALERT HELA TO THE FACT THAT BIG RED WAS CLAIM-JUMPING!
ERIC! I SENSE THY HAND IN THESE GRIM PROCEEDINGS!
THE WHOLE SCENE IS A REAL MIND-BOGGLER...
BUT KEVIN IS STILL MY MAIN CONCERN!


TAKE WARNING, DEMON! HELA WILL NOT MEEKLY SURRENDER THAT WHICH IS RIGHTLY HERS!
TO FORCE MY HAND IS TO PLUNGE OUR TWO STYGIAN KINGDOMS INTO WAR ETERNAL!
HORDES UPON COUNTLESS HORDES OF MINE OWN ELITE UNLIVING GUARD WILL INVADE THY REALM INFERNAL!

SUCH IMPUDENCE! SUCH ARROGANCE! NONE BUT YOU WOULD DARE RAISE THE DREADED SPECTER OF OMNIVERSAL ARMAGEDDON!
INNUMERABLE SOULS WOULD BE FRITTERED AWAY! INCALCULABLE RESOURCES SQUANDERED!
MORE THAN MERE DEATH! FAR MORE THAN FUTILE DESTRUCTION! THE RESULT WOULD SURELY BE UNDISPUTABLE ANNIHILATION ABSOLUTE!
EVEN THE RAGNORAK OF ASGARDIAN LEGEND WOULD GROVELINGLY PALE IN COMPARISON

AND EVEN AS THE TENSION ESCALATES, AND THE THREATENED PERILS MULTIPLY--


--AN ALMOST CELESTIAL HAZE FLARES WITHIN THE HOSPITAL ROOM WHICH HOUSES KEVIN MASTERSON!

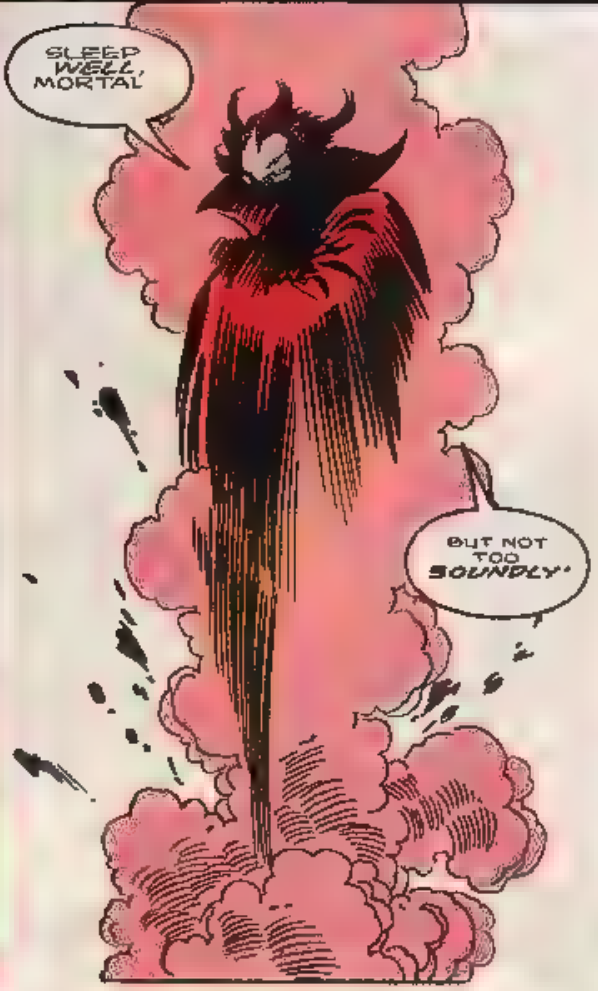
AND THEN, A REGAL FIGURE SLOWLY BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE --
SLEEP, YOUNG WARRIOR!
REST AND GROW STRONG!

DREAM OF A BETTER TOMORROW
-FOR THOU SHALT AWAKE WITH THE WILL AND STRENGTH TO MAKE IT SO!

YOUTHFUL INNOCENCE MUST EVER BE NURTURED!
CHILDREN DESERVE ONLY LOVE AND DEVOTION--
AND SHOULD BE PROTECTED AT ANY COST!

IN TRUTH, THEY ARE OUR FUTURE..
OUR LIVING LEGACY TO THE PARADE OF ENDLESS TOMORROWS!
SO SPEAKS ODIN!

ARRGGH!
ANOTHER PLAYER HAS UNEXPECTEDLY ENTERED THE GAME!
MY ADVANTAGE IS LOST! THE CONTRACT HAS BEEN NULLIFIED BY A POWER EQUAL TO MY OWN
THE CHILD IS NOW FREE!
SUCH A PITY.
I WAS BEGINNING TO ANTICIPATE OUR DEADLY DUEL WITH GREAT RELISH!
IT WOULD HAVE PROVEN QUITE CHALLENGING--
EVEN THOUGH DEATH IS DESTINED TO CONQUER ALL IN THE END!
I WOULD CAUTION YOU AGAINST SUCH SMUGNESS, GODDESS!



A TIRESOME BORE TO THE BITTER END!

HELA IS IN THY DEBT, MORTAL! WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR THEE TO KNOW MY ICY TOUCH—

—IT WILL BE AS SWIFT, AS PAINLESS AS POSSIBLE!

UH... THANKS!

BUT THERE'S NO RUSH AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!

I WONDER WHO WAS THAT OTHER PLAYER MEPHISTO MENTIONED?!

THY BREATH MAY AGAIN COME EASY, AND THY HEART LIGHTEN!

FOR DEATH DOTH DEPART!

HOO-BOY! YOU TRAVEL IN SOME PRETTY WILD CIRCLES, PAL!

THE VICTORY IS THINE, MY FRIEND!

AND THE PROOF OF THY SUCCESS AWAITS THEE BELOW!

BY THE WAY, DID YOU SEE THE WAY HELA KEPT CHECKING ME OUT?

I THINK SHE LIKES ME!

SHE IS DEATH, ERIC!

YEAH... BUT SUCH A CUTE DEATH!

MAYHAPS... IN THE ARMS OF THE RIGHT MAN, EVEN HELA COULD LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW LOVE!

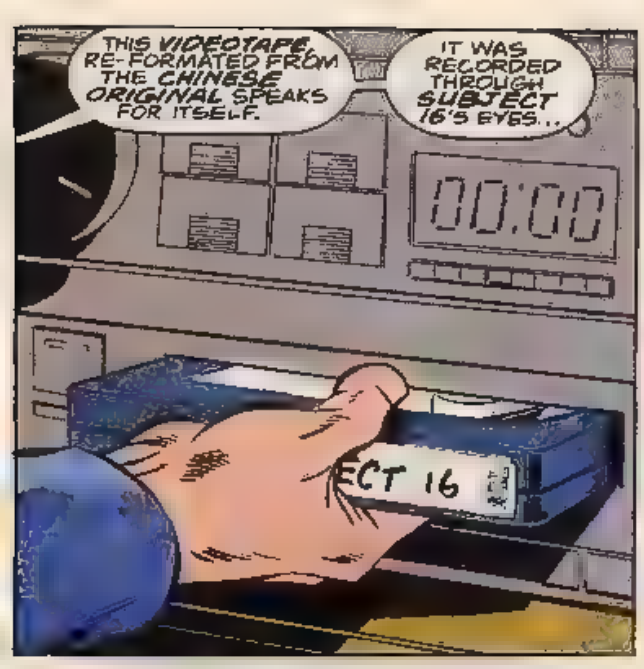
YOU REALLY THINK SO?

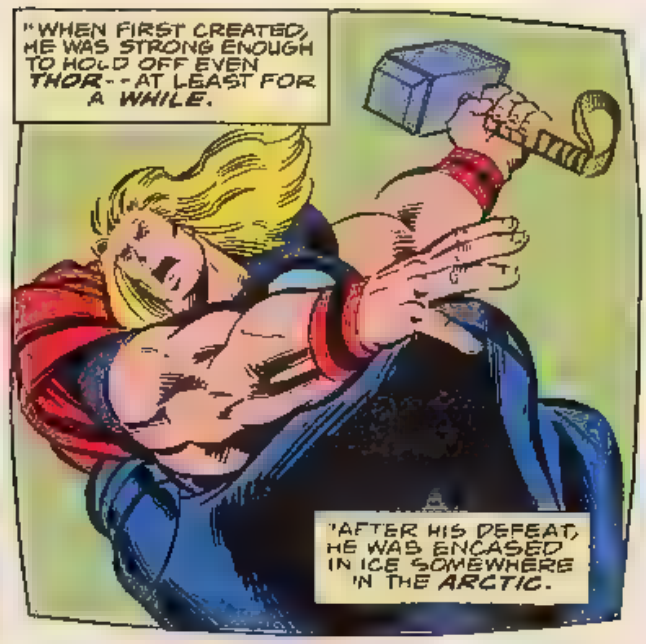
UH, ERIC...

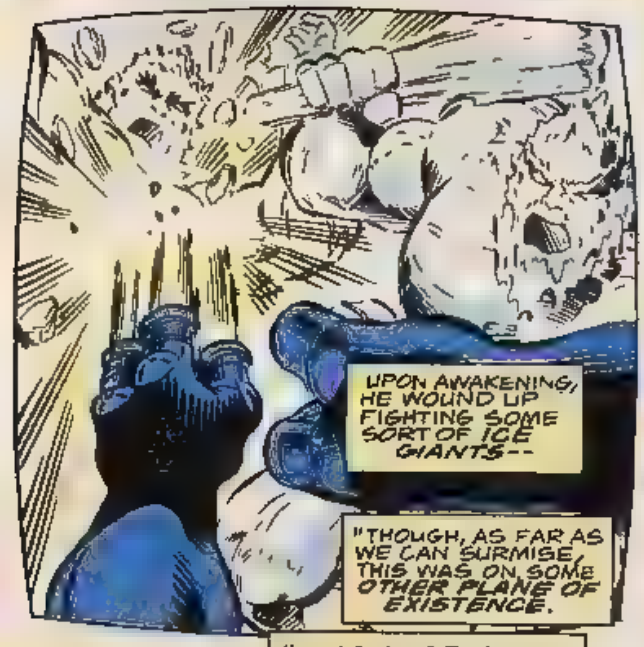
I'M KIDDING!

NEXT ISSUE:

"HE" ABSORBING MAN AND TITANIA RETURN! THE EVER-SENSATIONAL SHE-HULK GUEST-STARS! AND GUESS WHO GETS CAUGHT BETWEEN 'EM! HOO-BOY! BE HERE FOR MORE FUN'N GAMES IN THE MERRY MASTERSON MANNER!

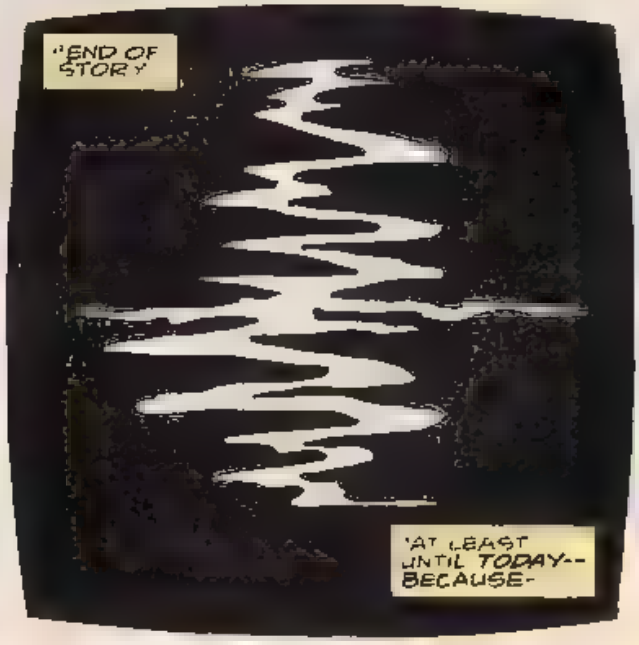

THIS VIDEOTAPE, RE-FORMATED FROM THE CHINESE ORIGINAL SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.
IT WAS RECORDED THROUGH SUBJECT 16'S EYES...
00:00
ECT 16


"WHEN FIRST CREATED, HE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD OFF EVEN THOR--AT LEAST FOR A WHILE.
"AFTER HIS DEFEAT, HE WAS ENCASED IN ICE SOMEWHERE IN THE ARCTIC.

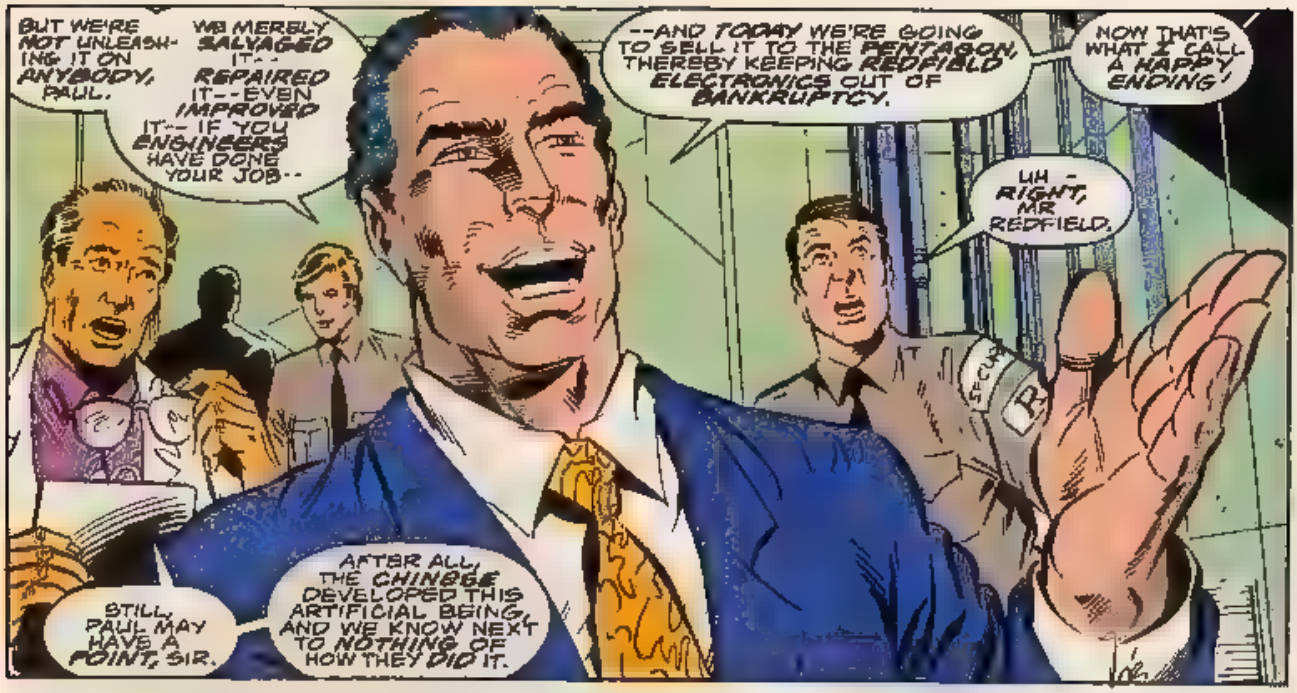

UPON AWAKENING, HE WOUND UP FIGHTING SOME SORT OF ICE GIANTS--
"THOUGH, AS FAR AS WE CAN SURMISE, THIS WAS ON SOME OTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE.

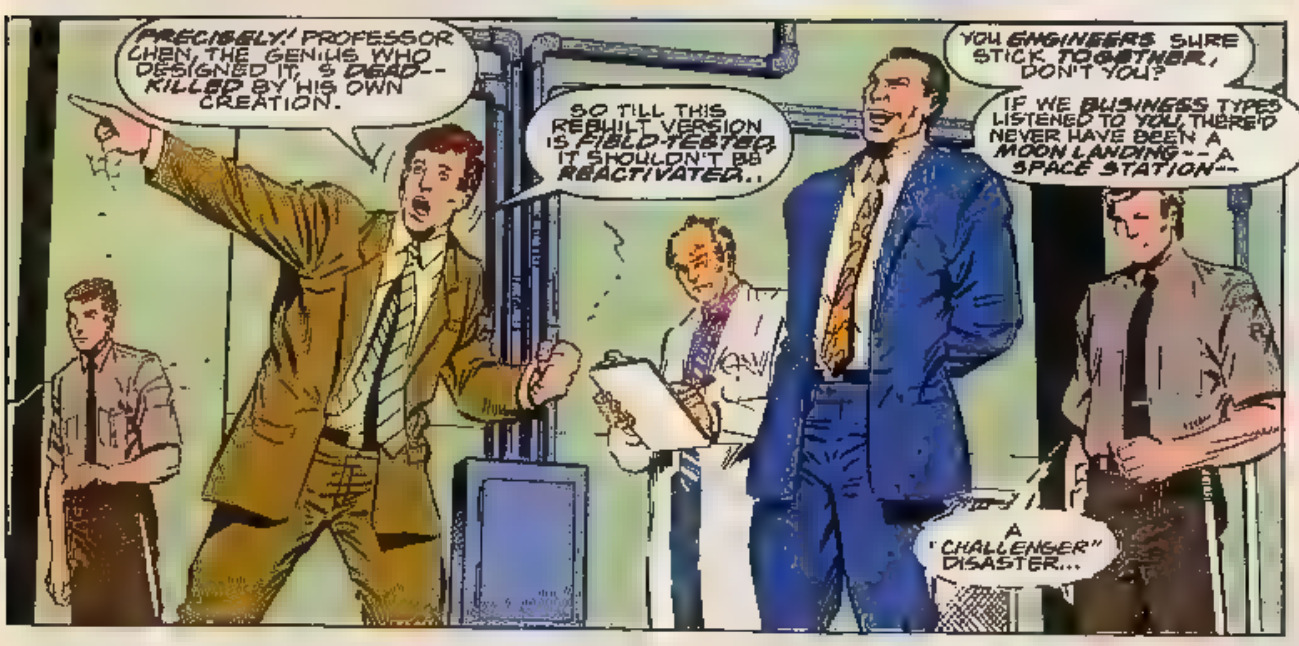
"EVENTUALLY, THEY SEEM TO HAVE CAST SOME SORT OF SPELL OR SOMETHING TO HURL HIM TO YET ANOTHER PLANE.
"AT THIS POINT, THE VIDEO-CAM SEEMS TO HAVE MALFUNCTIONED, AND WE'VE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED NEXT--

"--UNTIL IT KICKS IN AGAIN--
"--AS HE CRASHES IGNOMINIOUSLY ON A JUNKPILE, SOMEWHERE IN NEW JERSEY--IF THAT'S NOT A REDUNDANCY.

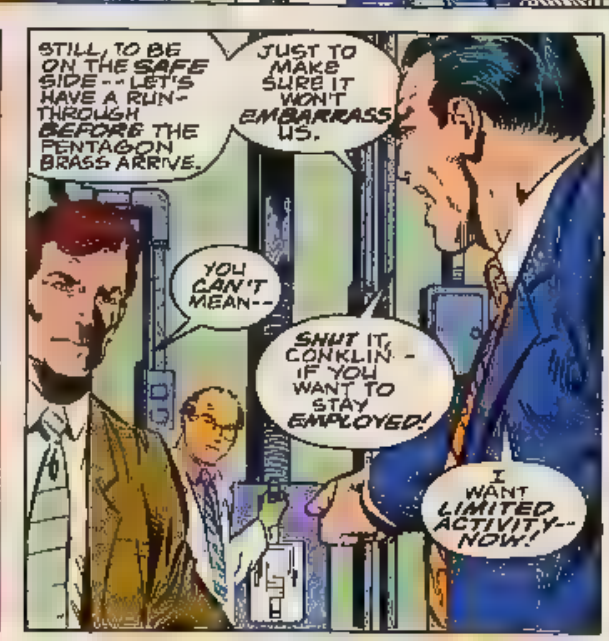

"END OF STORY
"AT LEAST UNTIL TODAY--BECAUSE-

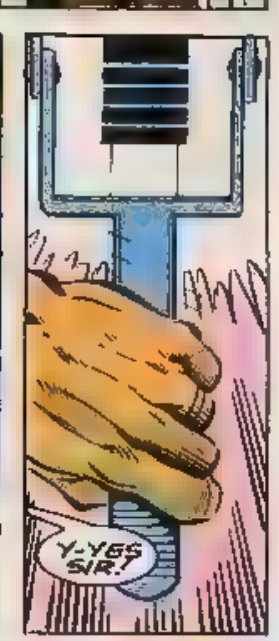
WHEN CONVENTIONAL POLICE TACTICS PROVED USELESS AGAINST SUPER-POWERED CRIMINALS, LT. MARCUS STONE FORMED A UNIT SPECIALLY TRAINED AND EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THEM. "MAD DOG" RASSITANO, SHARPSHOOTER — "RIGGER" RUIZ, TEAM ARMORER — "FIREWORKS" FIELSTEIN, DEMOLITIONS EXPERT — "MOTHER" MAJOWSKI, COMMUNICATIONS — ALL RAMRODDED BY CAPTAIN SHELLY CONKLIN, COMMANDING OFFICER. STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . **CODE: BLUE**

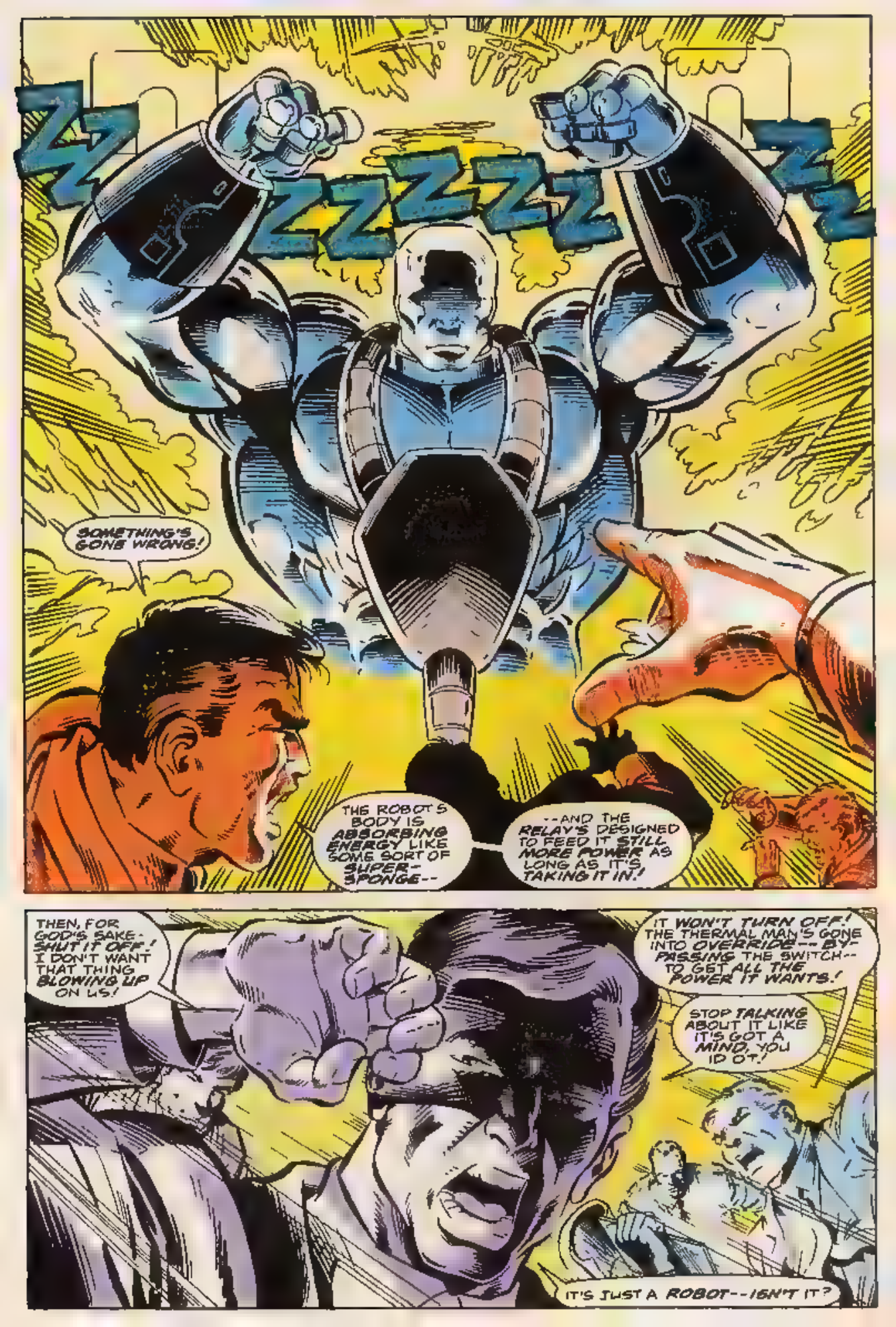

BUT WE'RE NOT UNLEASHING IT ON ANYBODY, PAUL.
WE MERELY SALVAGED IT-- REPAIRED IT--EVEN IMPROVED IT-- IF YOU ENGINEERS HAVE DONE YOUR JOB--
--AND TODAY WE'RE GOING TO SELL IT TO THE PENTAGON, THEREBY KEEPING REDFIELD ELECTRONICS OUT OF BANKRUPTCY.
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A HAPPY ENDING!
UH - RIGHT, MR REDFIELD.
STILL, PAUL MAY HAVE A POINT, SIR.
AFTER ALL, THE CHINESE DEVELOPED THIS ARTIFICIAL BEING, AND WE KNOW NEXT TO NOTHING OF HOW THEY DID IT.


PRECISELY! PROFESSOR CHEN, THE GENIUS WHO DESIGNED IT, S DEAD-- KILLED BY HIS OWN CREATION.
SO TILL THIS REBUILT VERSION IS FIELD-TESTED, IT SHOULDN'T BE REACTIVATED..
YOU ENGINEERS SURE STICK TOGETHER, DON'T YOU?
IF WE BUSINESS TYPES LISTENED TO YOU, THERE'D NEVER HAVE BEEN A MOON LANDING--A SPACE STATION--
A "CHALLENGER" DISASTER...

WHAT WAS THAT, GUARD?
NOTHING, MR. REDFIELD.


STILL, TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE--LET'S HAVE A RUN-THROUGH BEFORE THE PENTAGON BRASS ARRIVE.
JUST TO MAKE SURE IT WON'T EMBARRASS US.
YOU CAN'T MEAN--
SHUT IT, CONKLIN - IF YOU WANT TO STAY EMPLOYED!
I WANT LIMITED ACTIVITY--NOW!


Y-YES SIR!


ZZZZZZ
SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!
THE ROBOT'S BODY IS ABSORBING ENERGY LIKE SOME SORT OF SUPER-SPONGE--
--AND THE RELAY'S DESIGNED TO FEED IT STILL MORE POWER AS LONG AS IT'S TAKING IT IN!
THEN, FOR GOD'S SAKE- SHUT IT OFF! I DON'T WANT THAT THING BLOWING UP ON US!
IT WON'T TURN OFF! THE THERMAL MAN'S GONE INTO OVERRIDE-- BY-PASSING THE SWITCH-- TO GET ALL THE POWER IT WANTS!
STOP TALKING ABOUT IT LIKE IT'S GOT A MIND, YOU ID OT!
IT'S JUST A ROBOT--ISN'T IT?

LOOK! ITS HAND-- IT'S MOVING!
AND ITS EYES ARE OPENING!
THEN-- WE'VE SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING THE THERMAL MAN BACK TO LIFE!
AND THE VERY NEXT MOMENT-- THEY WISH THEY HADN'T!
THOSE WHO WOULD HOLD THE THERMAL MAN PRISONER MUST DIE!
AAAAAA
IT'S ALIVE!
RUN FOR IT!

SECURITY--THIS IS PAUL CONKLIN! WE NEED MORE MEN DOWN HERE--WITH ALL THE FIREPOWER YOU CAN MUSTER!

PROJECT 16 JUST WENT BALLISTIC!

THAT THING SMASHED THROUGH THE OUTER WALL--AND IT'S HEADED WEST!

OH MY GOD! THAT'LL TAKE IT RIGHT PAST OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

GOT TO CALL SHELLEY!

SOME MILES AWAY, IN MANHATTAN...

IT'S HEADED WHERE?!?

NO PARKING ANY TIME

POLICE

BUT THE COMPANY'S LOCATED IN A CIVILIAN AREA!

REDFIELD ELECTRONICS IS SUPPOSED TO BE DOING ONLY "CLEAN" RESEARCH--NOT TESTING WALKING WEAPONS!

CAPT. S. CONKLIN

PAUL--AMY AND PAUL JR. ARE AT HOME RIGHT NOW!

YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT? MY BACK WAS UP AGAINST THE WALL--NOT THAT THAT MATTERS NOW.

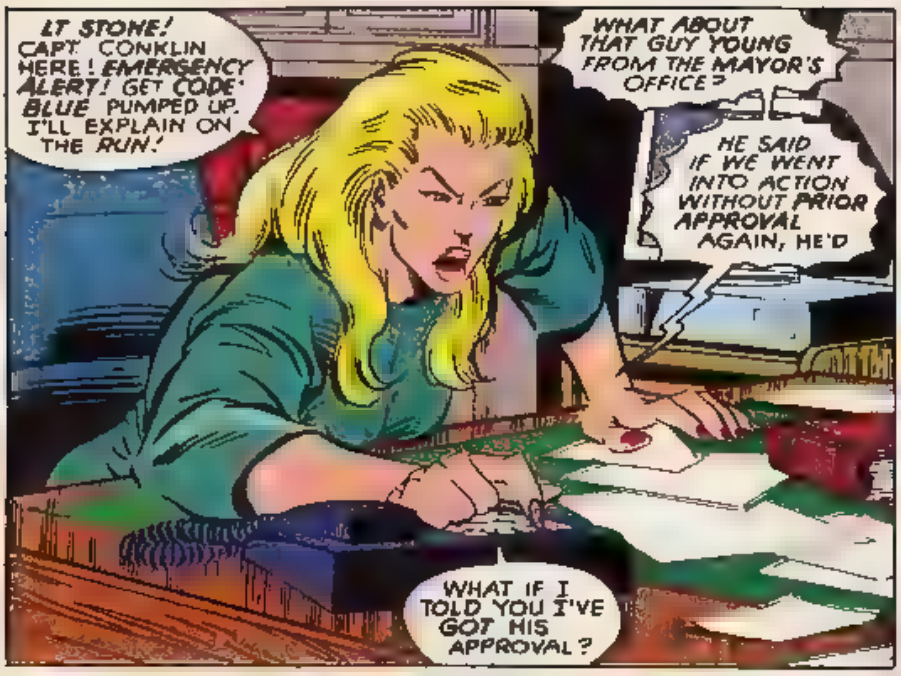
I KNOW CODE: BLUE'S UNDER A CLOUD--BUT IT MIGHT BE THE ONLY CHANCE WE HAVE OF STOPPING THAT ANDROID!

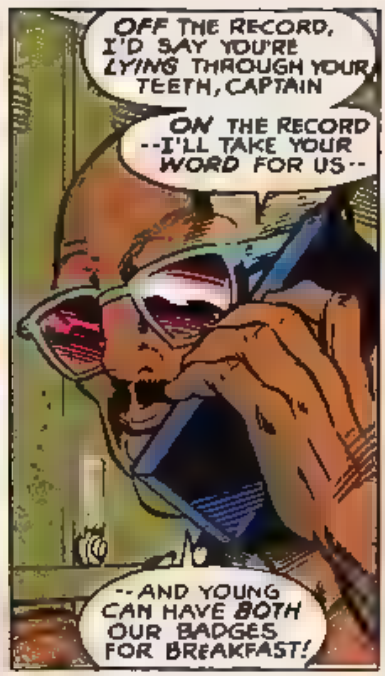
GOTTA GO DO WHAT I CAN!

NO WAY I CAN HELP AGAINST THE THERMAL MAN.

IF I CAN GET THROUGH TO THE NANNY, SHE'LL GET THE KIDS OUT OF THERE AND WARN THE NEIGHBORS.

BUT--THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE I'VE GOT TO DO--!





WITHIN MINUTES

WHAT'S WITH THE ABOUT FACE, LIEUTENANT?

I MEAN, THE WIFE AND I FIGURED CODE BLUE'S ABOUT A JOHN HANCOCK AWAY FROM THE SCRAP HEAP DUE TO THOSE BUDGET CUTS.

LOOK, I'VE TOLD ALL OF YOU-- THIS IS A VOLUNTEER OPERATION

ANYBODY WHO DOESN'T WANT TO STICK HIS NECK OUT CAN STAY BEHIND, AND NO HARD FEELINGS.

THAT'S WHAT MAKES US THINK THIS IS AN UNAUTHORIZED JOB.

THAT, AND YOU HAVING US PUT ON THESE NEW THERMAL INSULATION SUITS--

PURCHASED AT GREAT EXPENSE BY OUR FAIR CITY!

JUST A PRECAUTION, RASSITANO. NOW, LET'S GET -

HOLD UP A MINUTE!

I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

CAPTAIN CONKLIN?!

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE- IN BATTLE GEAR?

POLICE

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!

I'LL GIVE YOU THE DETAILS ON THE RUN!

YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THIS CAPTAIN? YOU'LL JUST BE GETTING IN EVEN DEEPER...

MY KIDS ARE IN DANGER, MARCUS. I'M GOING

POLICE

THAT'S JUST WHAT I SAID. WELCOME ABOARD.

CITY HALL -- THE OFFICE OF JIM YOUNG, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO HIS HONOR, THE MAYOR

SHE DID WHAT?

CHIEF O'GRADY, I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF TRYING TO NEGOTIATE A $12 MILLION SETTLEMENT OVER THAT LAWSUIT FILED BY TRASK & TRASK.

THE LAST THING I NEED TO HEAR IS THAT CAPT CONKLIN AND HER GLORY BOYS ARE OFF AND RUNNING AGAIN--

--AT CITY EXPENSE!

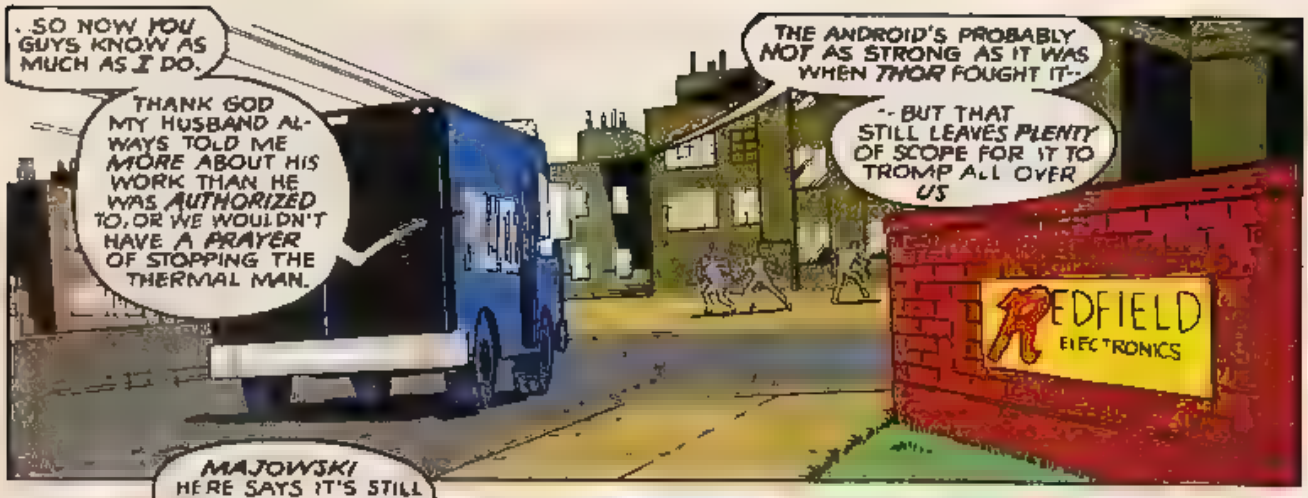
WELL, I'VE TRIED BEING A NICE GUY ABOUT THIS-- AND I SEE WHERE IT'S GOTTEN ME

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO, CHIEF.

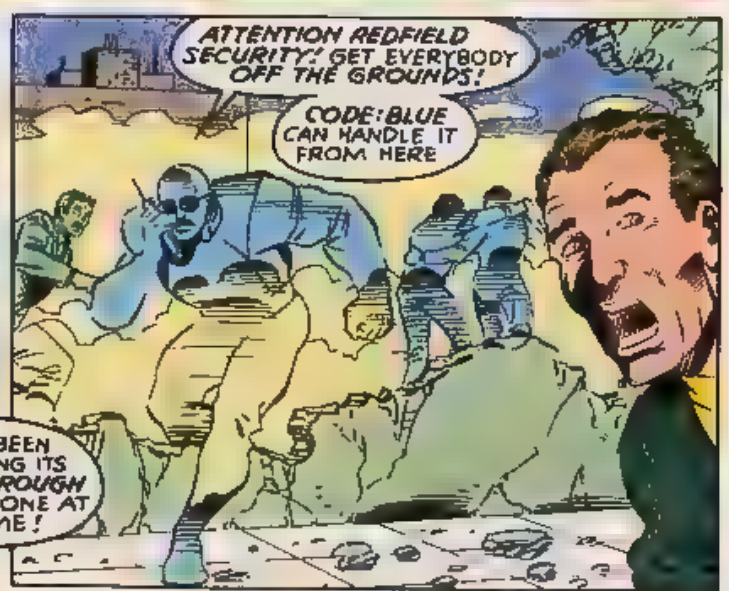
YES

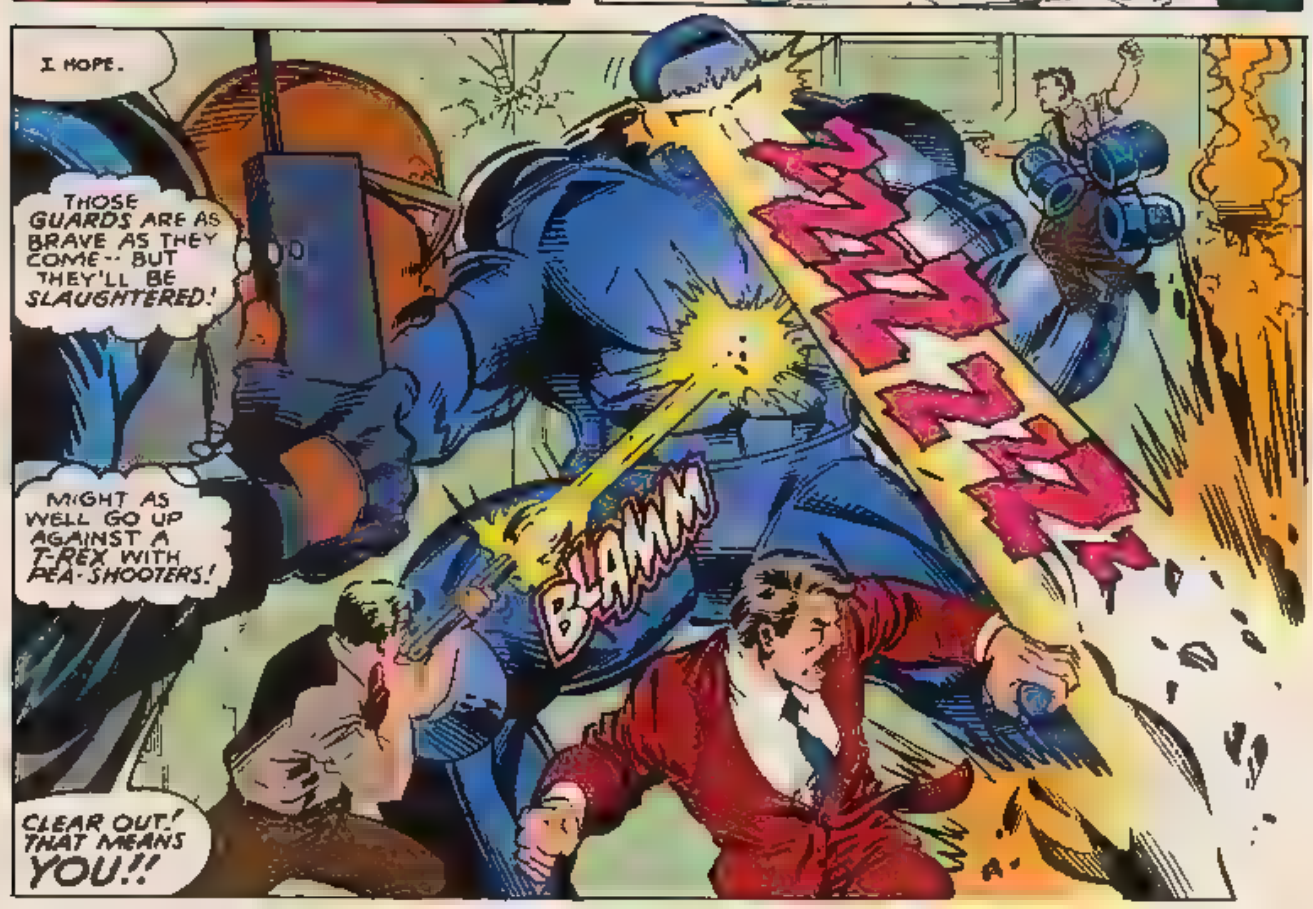
CHIEF O'GRADY

I'VE GOT TO SACK SHELLEY CONKLIN!


SO NOW YOU GUYS KNOW AS MUCH AS I DO.
THANK GOD MY HUSBAND ALWAYS TOLD ME MORE ABOUT HIS WORK THAN HE WAS AUTHORIZED TO, OR WE WOULDN'T HAVE A PRAYER OF STOPPING THE THERMAL MAN.
THE ANDROID'S PROBABLY NOT AS STRONG AS IT WAS WHEN THOR FOUGHT IT--
-- BUT THAT STILL LEAVES PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR IT TO TROMP ALL OVER US
REDFIELD ELECTRONICS

MAJOWSKI HERE SAYS IT'S STILL ON THE GROUNDS OF REDFIELD.
IT THINKS IN STRAIGHT LINES-- AND THERE WERE SOME BUILDINGS IN ITS PATH.
IT'S BEEN CRASHING ITS WAY THROUGH THEM-- ONE AT A TIME!


ATTENTION REDFIELD SECURITY! GET EVERYBODY OFF THE GROUNDS!
CODE: BLUE CAN HANDLE IT FROM HERE


I HOPE.
THOSE GUARDS ARE AS BRAVE AS THEY COME-- BUT THEY'LL BE SLAUGHTERED!
MIGHT AS WELL GO UP AGAINST A T-REX WITH PEA-SHOOTERS!
CLEAR OUT! THAT MEANS YOU!!
BLAMM
ZZZZZZZZ

"MAD DOG" RASSITANO AND "FIREWORKS" FIELSTEIN -- THEY'RE THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT THEY DO.

BUT, IN ITS OWN WAY -- SO IS THE THERMAL MAN.

AT LEAST THESE ROCKET LAUNCHERS GOT 'IM TO DROP THAT GUARD WHILE HE STILL HAD A FEW BONES INTACT!

SHROOM

HOPE WE DO, WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER!

OUR ROCKETS DON'T SEEM TO HAVE MUCH MORE THAN NUISANCE VALUE!

OUR ONLY ADVANTAGE SEEMS TO BE THAT HE'S SLOW -- NEARLY MINDLESS -- WITH NO MOTIVE BUT SHEER DESTRUCTION

MAYBE SO -- BUT HE'S GOOD AT THAT, AIN'T HE?

SCRATCH ONE ROCKET LAUNCHER --

WHOM!!

AND ALMOST SCRATCH SGT JULIUS ANTHONY RASSITANO!

MAYBE YOUR GUYS DID BETTER THAN THEY THINK OUT THERE, LT STONE.

THE THERMAL MAN'S ENERGY SIGNATURE IS WEAKENING -- AT LEAST A LITTLE!

HAVE RUIZ TRY THE LIQUID NITRO CANNON!

WAY AHEAD OF YOU, MAJOWSKI!

ABSOLUTE ZERO-- COMING RIGHT ATCHA, BIG MAN!

YOU DID IT, RUIZ! HE'S SLOWING.

--HE'S STOPPED!

BUT-- FOR HOW LONG?

THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO FIND OUT

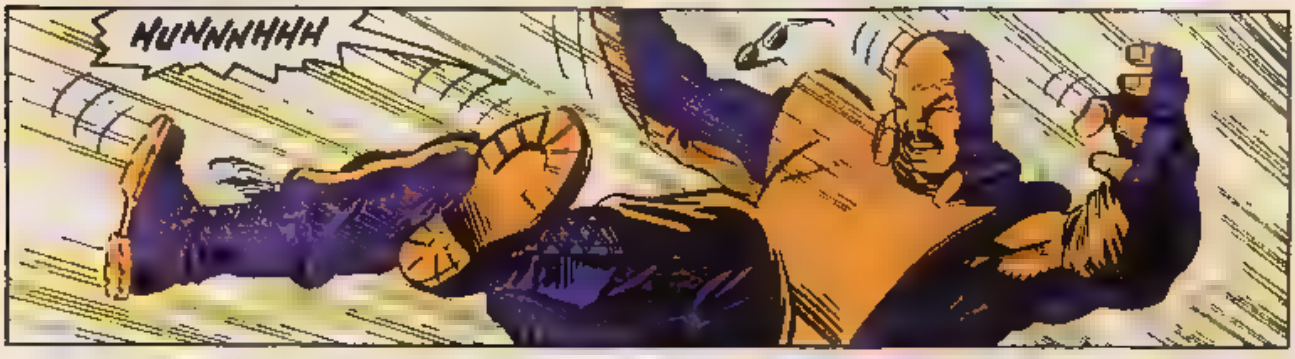
YOU, LIEUTENANT? HEY, THAT'S OUR JOB!

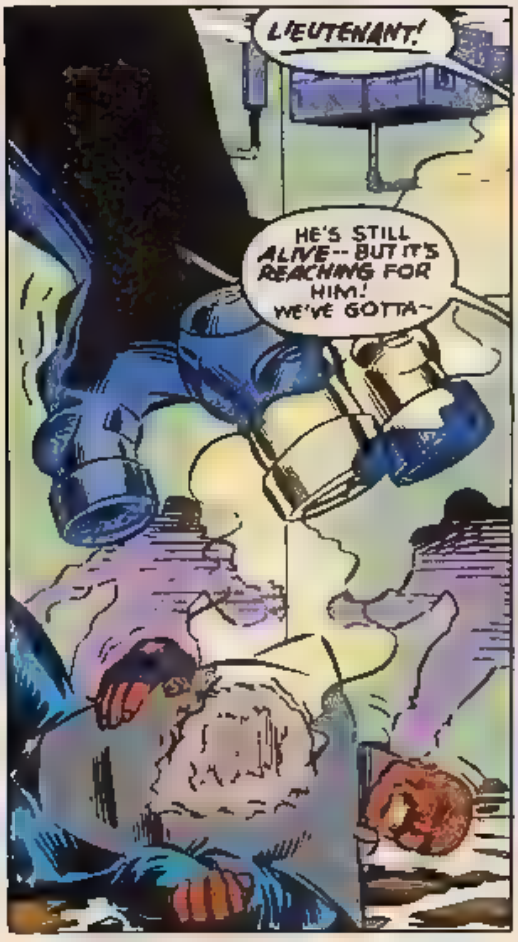
NOT THIS TIME.

I CAN'T DETECT ANY MOVEMENT-- NOT EVEN AT THIS RANGE.

YOU KNOW, I ALMOST THINK WE REALLY DID--

THOOOM


MUNNNHHH


LIEUTENANT!
HE'S STILL ALIVE-- BUT IT'S REACHING FOR HIM! WE'VE GOTTA-

BACK OFF, TINY!
THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME NOW
KLANG
THUNDERSTRIKE!

AS, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE GROUNDS

CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

I YOU BETTER-- ASK MR. CONKLIN-- OR MR REDFIELD--

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR PAUL CONKLIN.

LANCE

BUT THEN YOU WOULD BE, WOULDN'T YOU-- MRS. CONKLIN?

REDFIELD! THIS TRAGEDY IS YOUR FAULT AND DON'T THINK THE FACTS AREN'T GOING TO COME OUT!

AS CHIEF ENGINEER, IT WAS PAUL'S DECISION, NOT MINE, TO ACTIVATE THE ANDROID.

MY LAWYERS WILL ESTABLISH THAT VERY CLEARLY.

YOU'LL BE LUCKY IF YOU'RE STILL ON THE FORCE THEN

OH, DID I MENTION I HAVE FRIENDS IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE?

NO SENSE WASTING ANY MORE TIME WITH HIM.

NOW THAT I'VE MADE SURE THE KIDS ARE SAFE, I SHOULD BE HELPING CODE BLUE, BUT--

HAVE YOU SEEN PAUL CONKLIN?

I SAW HIM ⟨koff koff⟩ RIGHT AFTER IT BROKE FREE-- BUT NOT SINCE!

FOR ALL I KNOW-- HE'S ⟨koff⟩ STILL IN THERE!

OH, PLEASE, DEAR GOD --NO!

AS...

I'M GOING TO MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D *NEVER WOKE UP*, RIP VAN WINKLE!

POWWW

MIGHT AS WELL HAVE A PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE WITH A *TOASTER!*

IT'S UP TO *ME* TO PROVE I'M *ENOUGH!*

I WAS THE ONLY ONE AT *AVENGERS HQ* WHEN WORD CAME THAT THE THERMAL MAN HAD GOTTEN *LOOSE*.

SHOOSH!

THAT'LL BE ONE OF HIS *THERMAL BEAMS*...

I *MIGHT* BE ABLE TO SURVIVE THAT BLAST HEAD-ON-- AND I MIGHT *NOT*--

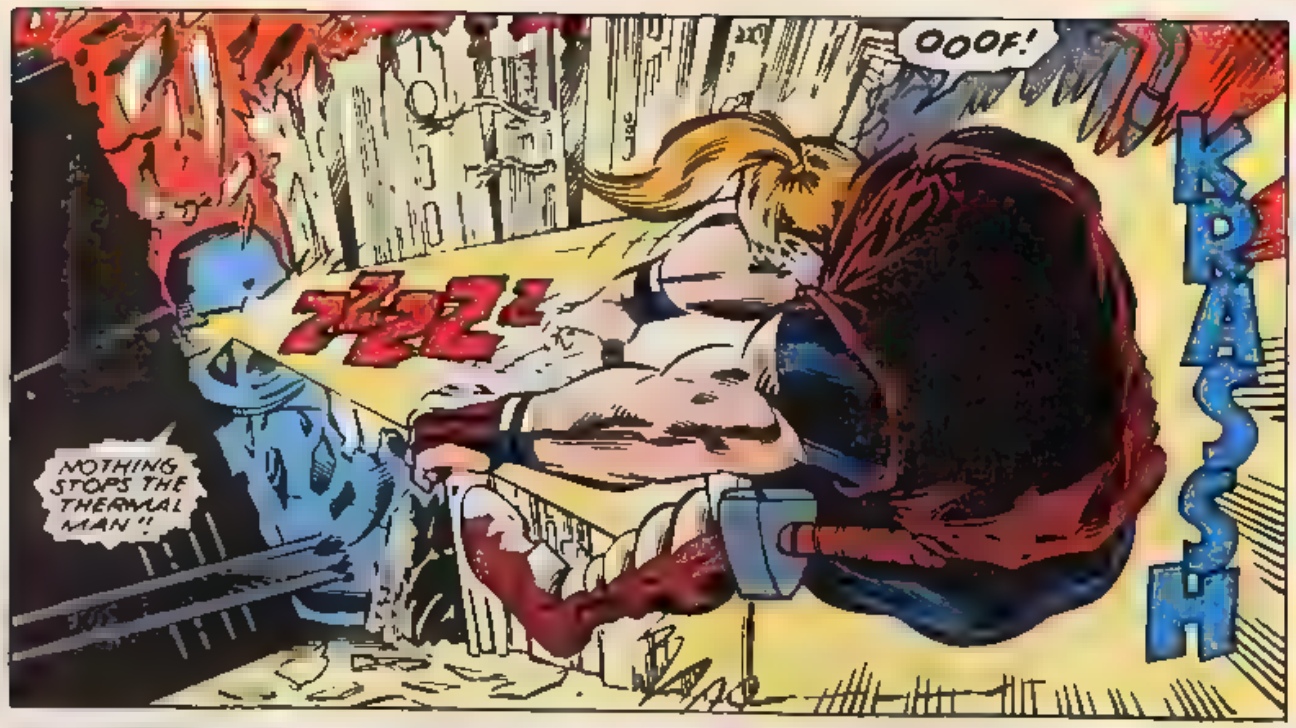
--BUT *MRS MASTERSON* DIDN'T RAISE ANY SONS *STUPID* ENOUGH TO TRY TO *FIND OUT*, IF THEY DON'T *HAVE* TO.

WHY ELSE DID *THOR* GIVE ME THIS *MINOR-LEAGUE MJOLNIR?*

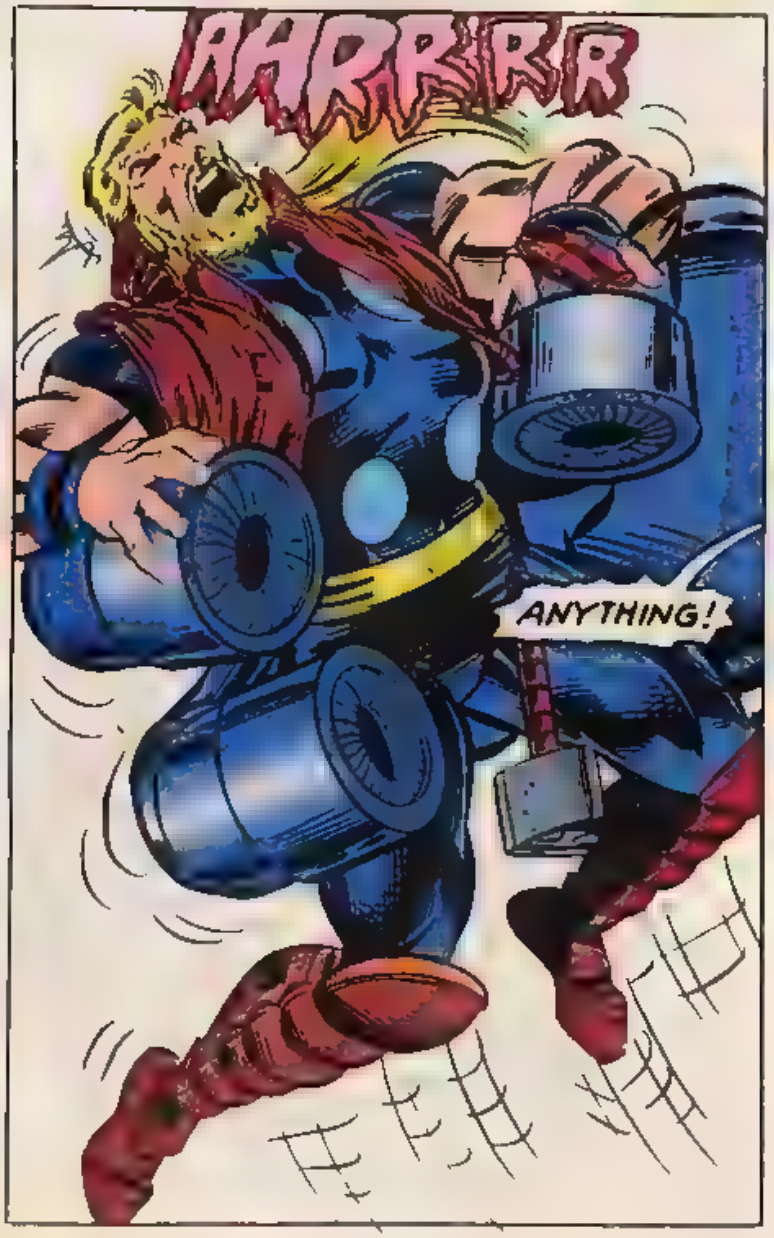
YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE, LIEUTENANT IF NOT FOR YOUR INSULATION GEAR
NEVER MIND THAT
MAJOWSKI! REMEMBER THAT PACKAGE WE PROCURED FROM STARK INDUSTRIES--
-AFTER OUR RUN IN WITH THE DOOMBOT?
SOME PEOPLE JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO RELAX!

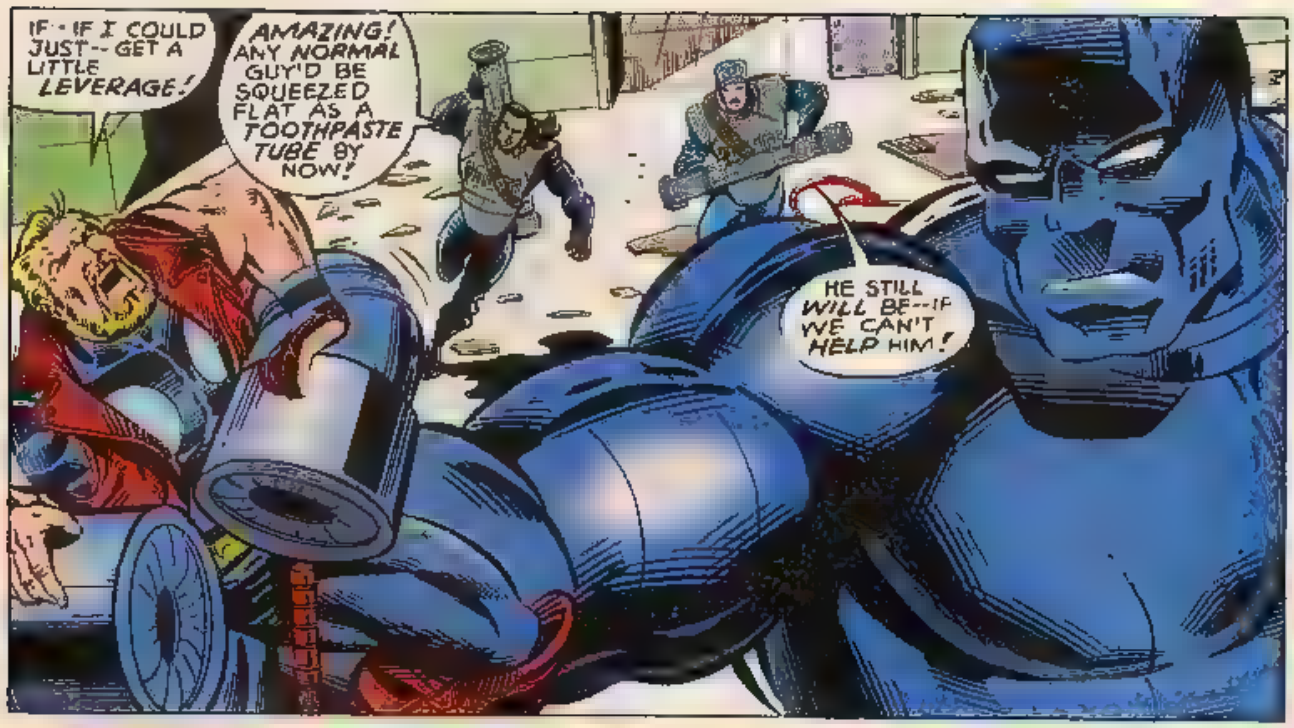
THAT'S IT, OLD BUDDY- JUST KEEP STANDING RIGHT THERE FOR A MINUTE!
WHILE YOU RE CHARGE YOUR BATTERIES, OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU HAVE TO DO-

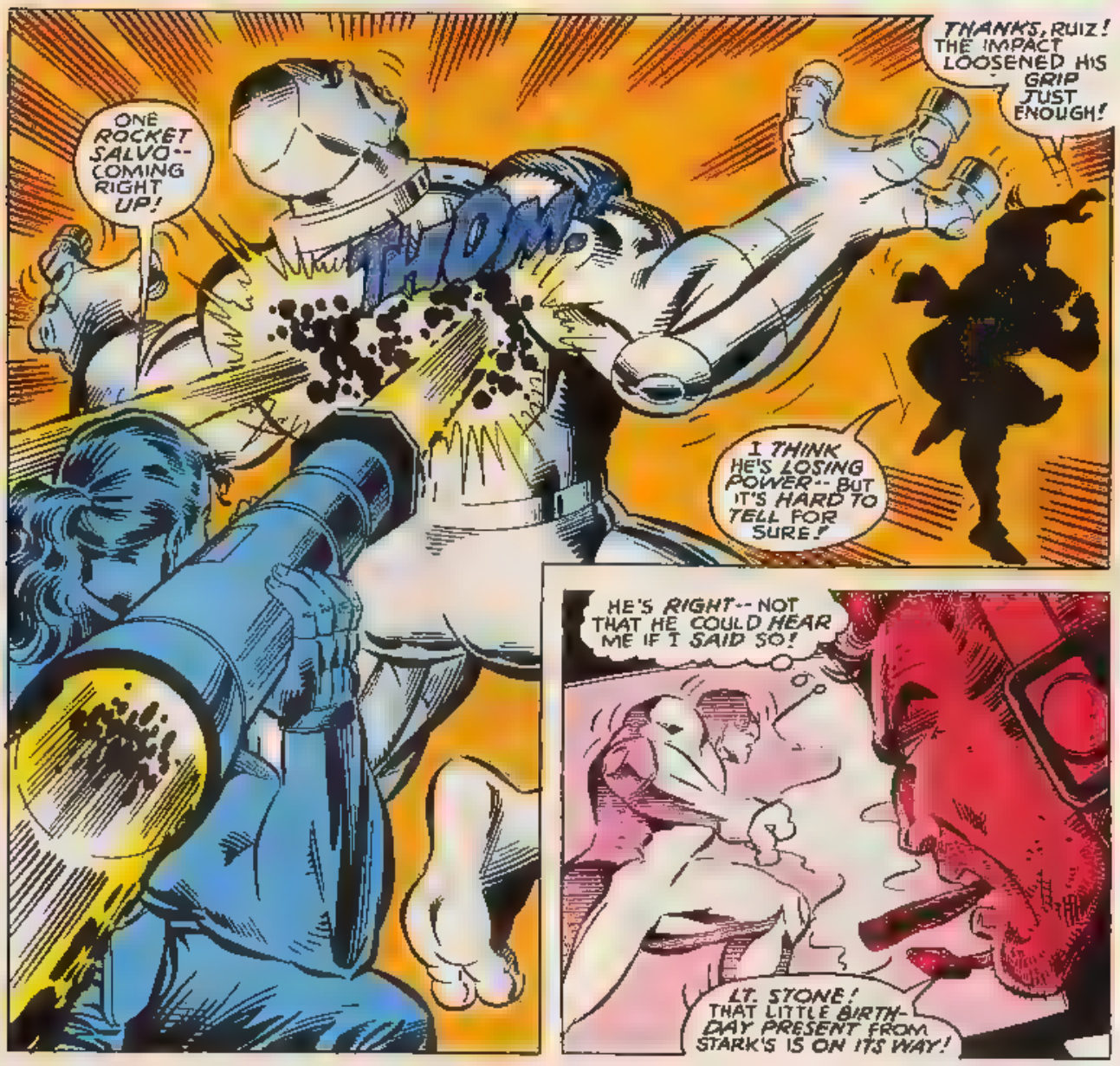
KWAAAM
--I'LL CHARGE YOU!!

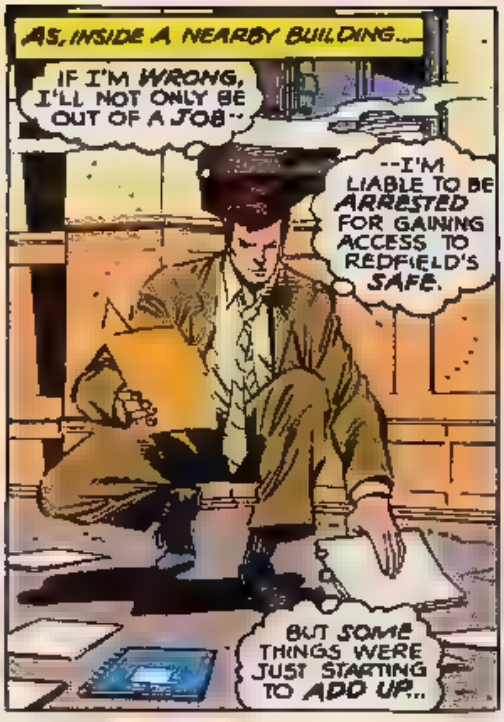

OOOF!
KRASSH
NOTHING STOPS THE THERMAL MAN!!

I MUST DESTROY ANYTHING IN MY PATH!!
THUNDERSTRIKE! LOOK OUT!


AARRRR
ANYTHING!

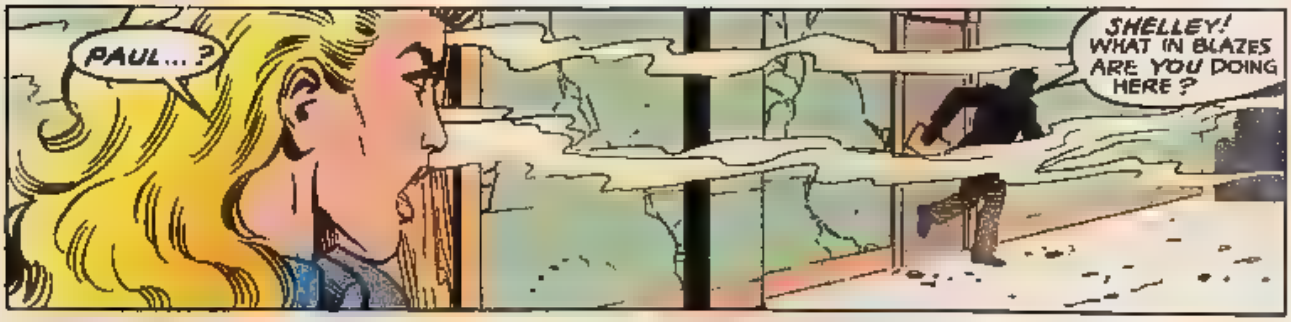

IF - IF I COULD JUST -- GET A LITTLE LEVERAGE!
AMAZING! ANY NORMAL GUY'D BE SQUEEZED FLAT AS A TOOTHPASTE TUBE BY NOW!
HE STILL WILL BE--IF WE CAN'T HELP HIM!

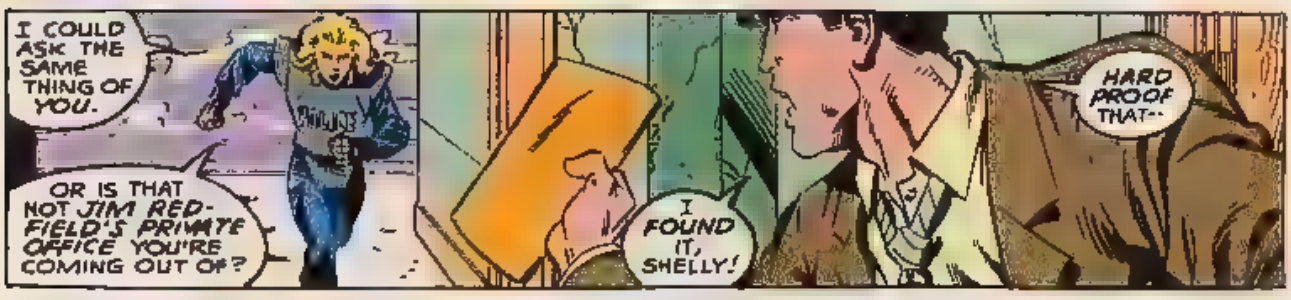

THANKS, RUIZ! THE IMPACT LOOSENED HIS GRIP JUST ENOUGH!
ONE ROCKET SALVO -- COMING RIGHT UP!
THOM
I THINK HE'S LOSING POWER -- BUT IT'S HARD TO TELL FOR SURE!
HE'S RIGHT -- NOT THAT HE COULD HEAR ME IF I SAID SO!
LT. STONE! THAT LITTLE BIRTH-DAY PRESENT FROM STARK'S IS ON ITS WAY!

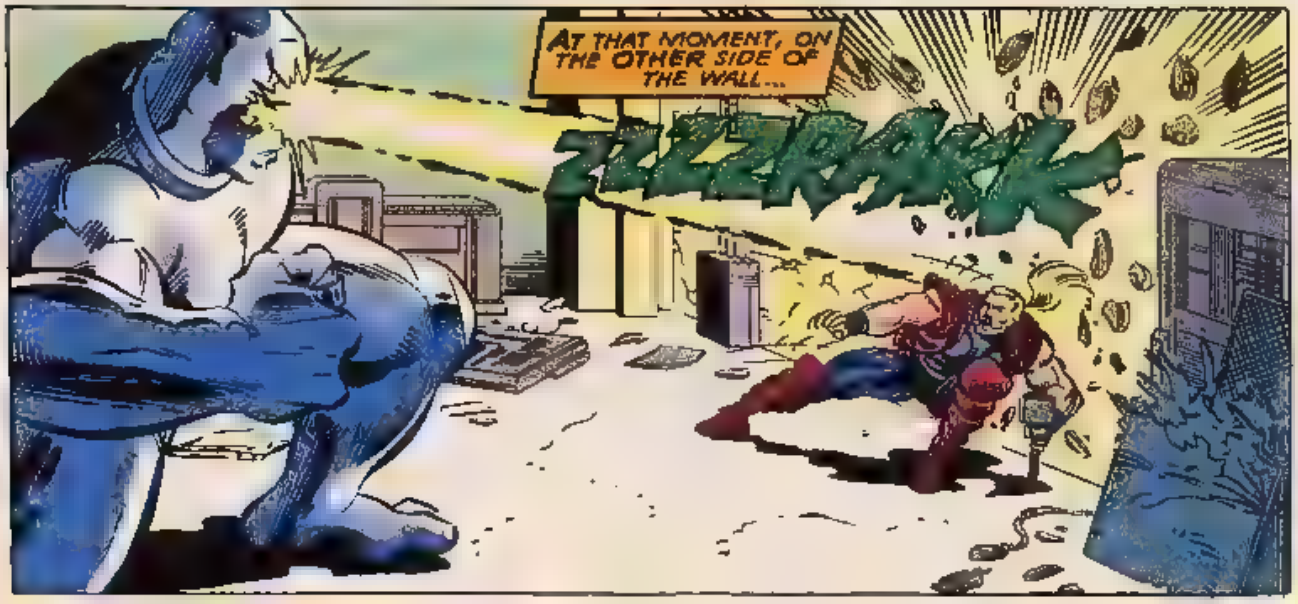

AS, INSIDE A NEARBY BUILDING...
IF I'M WRONG, I'LL NOT ONLY BE OUT OF A JOB--
--I'M LIABLE TO BE ARRESTED FOR GAINING ACCESS TO REDFIELD'S SAFE.
BUT SOME THINGS WERE JUST STARTING TO ADD UP...

I WAS RIGHT!
THOUGH I ALMOST WISH I HADN'T BEEN!

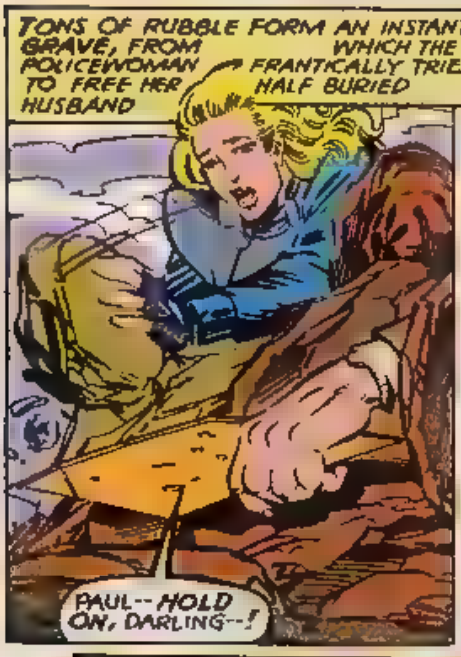
NOW IF I CAN JUST GET OUT OF HERE ALIVE, PAST THE CRUMBLING WALLS AND THE FIRES SPRINGING UP...

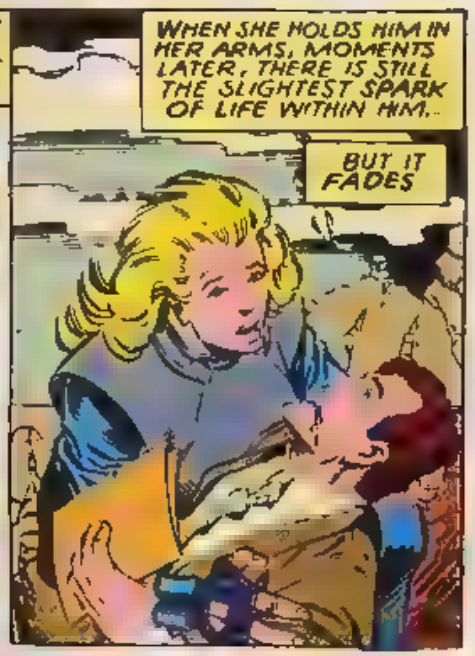

PAUL...?
SHELLEY! WHAT IN BLAZES ARE YOU DOING HERE?

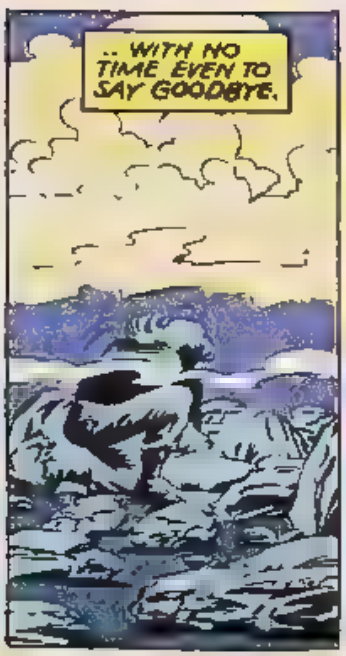

I COULD ASK THE SAME THING OF YOU.
OR IS THAT NOT JIM REDFIELD'S PRIVATE OFFICE YOU'RE COMING OUT OF?
I FOUND IT, SHELLY!
HARD PROOF THAT--

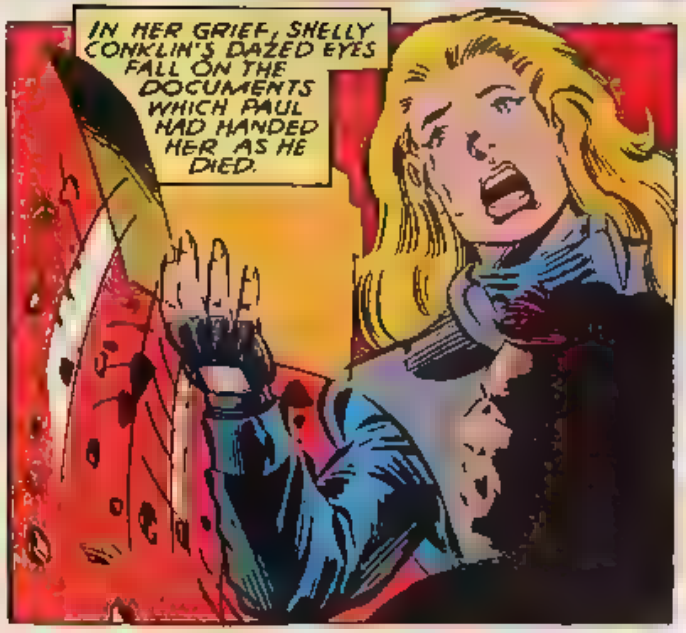

AT THAT MOMENT, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL...
ZZZKRAK

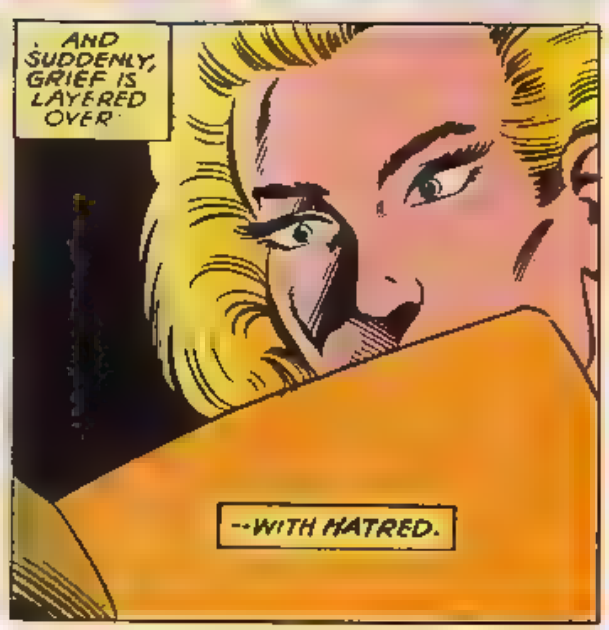
NO!
OH, MY GOD PAUL--!


TONS OF RUBBLE FORM AN INSTANT GRAVE, FROM WHICH THE POLICEWOMAN FRANTICALLY TRIES TO FREE HER HALF BURIED HUSBAND
PAUL--HOLD ON, DARLING--!


WHEN SHE HOLDS HIM IN HER ARMS, MOMENTS LATER, THERE IS STILL THE SLIGHTEST SPARK OF LIFE WITHIN HIM...
BUT IT FADES

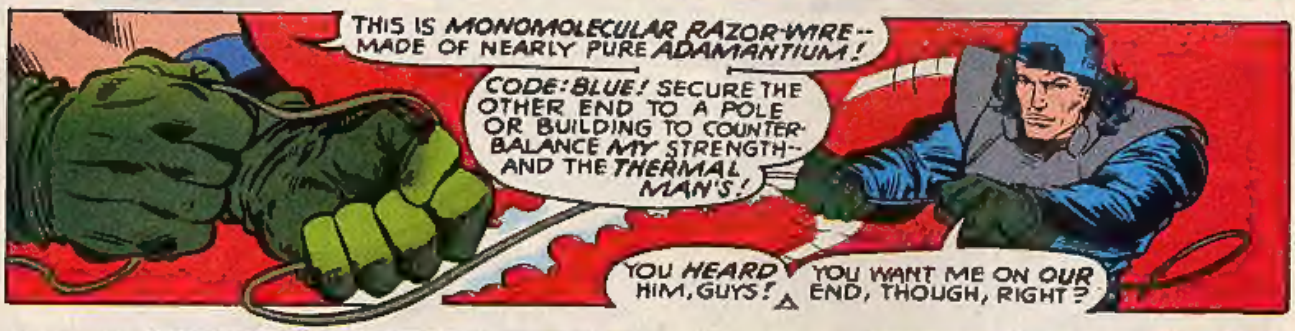

...WITH NO TIME EVEN TO SAY GOODBYE.


IN HER GRIEF, SHELLY CONKLIN'S DAZED EYES FALL ON THE DOCUMENTS WHICH PAUL HAD HANDED HER AS HE DIED.

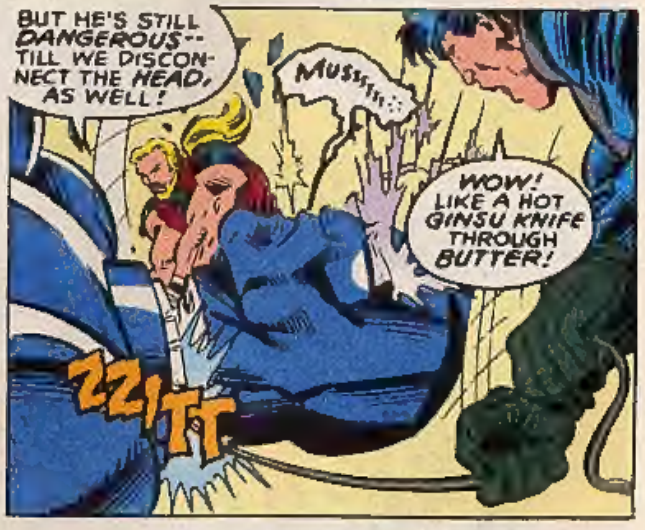

AND SUDDENLY, GRIEF IS LAYERED OVER
--WITH HATRED.

--IT'S AFFIRMATIVE, LIEUTENANT. THE MONITORS SHOW THE ANDROID'S FINALLY RUNNING OUT OF POWER.
BUT IT COULD STILL DO LOTS MORE DAMAGE BEFORE IT QUITS, MAJOWSKI!
Uh-Oh-- GOTTA GO! I THINK WE JUST GOT A PRESENT FROM THE "STARK"!

PUT THESE SPECIAL ADAMANTIUM-LACED GLOVES ON, YOU TWO --IF YOU WANT TO HAVE HANDS WHEN THIS IS OVER!
I DON'T THINK HE IS, RASSITANO.


THIS IS MONOMOLECULAR RAZOR-WIRE-- MADE OF NEARLY PURE ADAMANTIUM!
CODE: BLUE! SECURE THE OTHER END TO A POLE OR BUILDING TO COUNTER-BALANCE MY STRENGTH-- AND THE THERMAL MAN'S!
YOU HEARD HIM, GUYS!
YOU WANT ME ON OUR END, THOUGH, RIGHT?

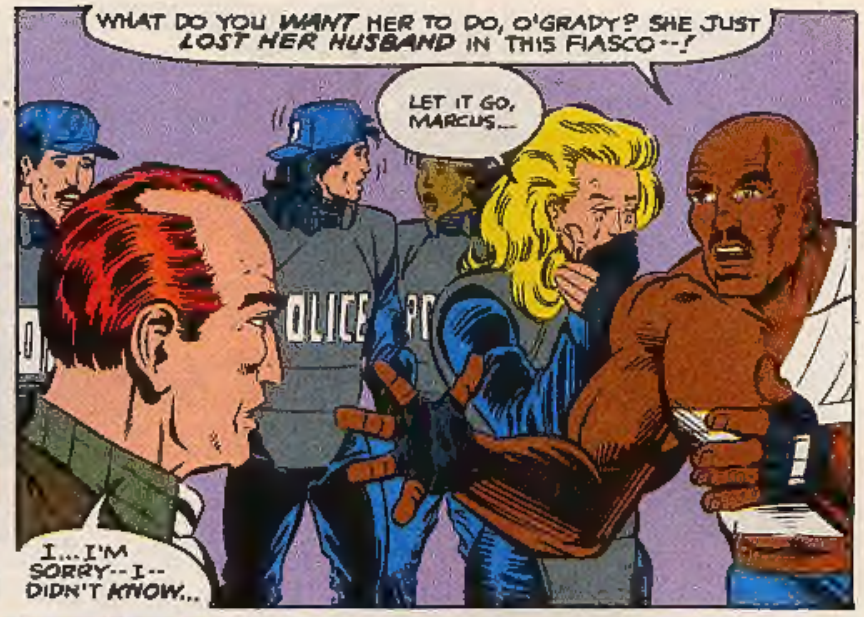
CHECK! I NEED YOUR SIDE FOR AN ANCHOR, WHILE I DO-- THIS!
MUST DESTROY!
MUST DESTROY!
HOLY--! THE WIRE SLICED RIGHT THROUGH HIS LEGS!
ZZITT

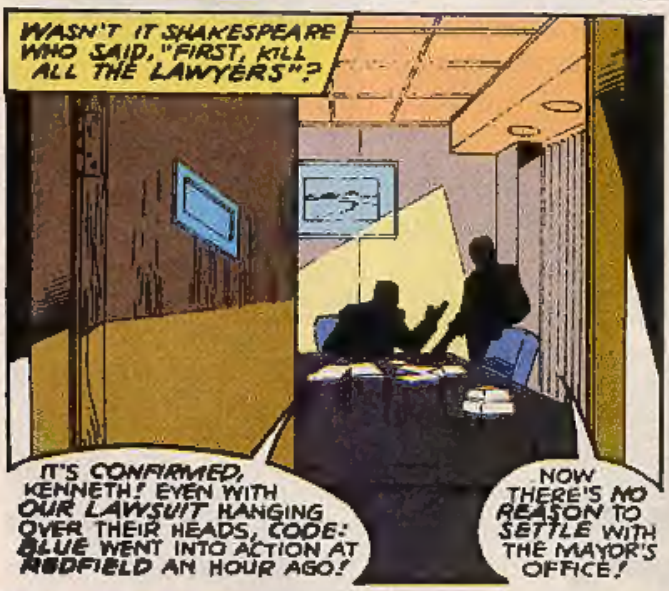

BUT HE'S STILL DANGEROUS-- TILL WE DISCONNECT THE HEAD, AS WELL!
MUSSSSS...
WOW! LIKE A HOT GINSU KNIFE THROUGH BUTTER!
ZZITT

YOU BAILED US OUT, BLONDIE!
DON'T FORGET WHO GOT US THE WIRE!
WE'LL HAND OUT MEDALS LATER, PEOPLE...

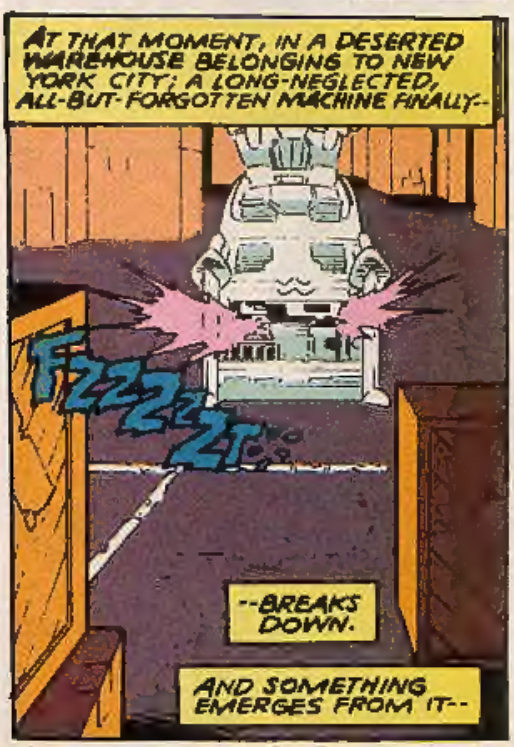
...FIRST, I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHY CAPT. CONKLIN'S BEATIN' UP ON THE GUY WHO OWNS THE PLACE!
HE SET THIS UP, MARCUS!
STOP HER! SH-SHE'S CRAZY!
HE GOT PAUL KILLED!
I DON'T THINK SO, REDFIELD.
EXPERTS'LL HAVE TO GO OVER THE TECHNICAL DETAILS-- BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF THESE TOP-SECRET MEMOS--
HE WENT AROUND PAUL-- HIS CHIEF ENGINEER TO PROGRAM THE ANDROID TO RUN WILD WHEN ACTIVATED--AND DESTROY REDFIELD ELECTRONICS!
HE WOULDN'T TAKE A CHANCE THE PENTAGON MIGHT PASS ON ACQUIRING THE THERMAL MAN.
GOING FOR THE SHORT-END INSURANCE MONEY, huh, REDFIELD?
I DEMAND TO SEE MY ATTORNEY.
'STRIKE-- I GUESS YOU KNOW HOW WE FEEL.
I'M THE ONE WHO'S GRATEFUL, LT. STONE.
AFTER ALL, I PAY TAXES IN NEW YORK, TOO...
...AND THERE ISN'T ANYPLACE THEY'RE BETTER SPENT THAN FINANCING CODE:BLUE!
DON'T GO TOO FAR, THUNDER MAN.
Yeah. WE MAY NEED YOU AS A CHARACTER WITNESS.
MARCUS-- IT'S PAUL! HE'S--
EASY, CAPTAIN. IF HE GOT THE GOODS ON REDFIELD, HE'S PROBABLY SAVED A LOT OF LIVES IN THE LONG RUN.
NOT THAT THAT'S MUCH OF A CONSOLATION RIGHT NOW, BUT--
CHIEF--?

CAPTAIN, I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU THIS-- BUT CODE: BLUE IS OFFICIALLY DISBANDED, AS OF TODAY.
AND YOU'RE SUSPENDED-- PENDING AN INVESTIGATION, OF COURSE. YOU--
YOU'RE CRYING?


WHAT DO YOU WANT HER TO DO, O'GRADY? SHE JUST LOST HER HUSBAND IN THIS FIASCO--!
LET IT GO, MARCUS...
I...I'M SORRY--I-- DIDN'T KNOW...


WASN'T IT SHAKESPEARE WHO SAID, "FIRST, KILL ALL THE LAWYERS"?
IT'S CONFIRMED, KENNETH! EVEN WITH OUR LAWSUIT HANGING OVER THEIR HEADS, CODE: BLUE WENT INTO ACTION AT REDFIELD AN HOUR AGO!
NOW THERE'S NO REASON TO SETTLE WITH THE MAYOR'S OFFICE!

PRECISELY! WE CAN GET REDFIELD HIMSELF TO SUE THE CITY-- EVEN THOUGH HE'S BEEN ARRESTED ON SOME TRUMPED-UP CHARGE.
AND NO SETTLING FOR A PALTRY $12 MILLION, KEVIN!
THIS TIME-- THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!
AND NOBODY CAN STOP US!


AT THAT MOMENT, IN A DESERTED WAREHOUSE BELONGING TO NEW YORK CITY; A LONG-NEGLECTED, ALL-BUT-FORGOTTEN MACHINE FINALLY--
FZZZZZT...
--BREAKS DOWN.
AND SOMETHING EMERGES FROM IT--

--SOMETHING THAT UTTERS A SINGLE, SINISTER SYLLABLE:
KRASK!
NEXT: WHERE DAREDEVILS FEAR TO TREAD...

BULLPEN BULLETINS

NEWSLINE

ITEM! The Marvel softball team, the Punishers, had an impressive record this season of six wins and one loss. More games were scheduled, but had to be cancelled due to rain. (Where was Thor when we really needed him?) Against DC, we were undefeated, with three wins and two ties. Team Captain **Robbie Carosella** (from the Marvel stat room) was X-stat-ic about the playing of assistant editor **Mark "Super" Powers,** a star player from last season. Robbie, who was assisted in his coaching duties by inker **Don Hudson**, noted some other standouts: "**Kevin Tang** is the fastest player I've ever seen. A new player this year was **John Dokes** at shortstop. He's an ad-guy, and he's a real find. **Whitey Gonzalez** (from the stat room) is a fabulous player. And secretary **Stephanie Hallberg** is an excellent player. In all my years here, this is the best team I've ever been associated with." Marvel's Marketing Director, **Sven Larsen**, threw a big party for the team to commemorate the end of another winning season!

ITEM! An all-new group of super heroes called the Metahumes makes their debut this week in the SPIDER-MAN: FRIENDS & ENEMIES Limited Series, written by Spider-Group Editor **Danny Fingeroth**, with art by **Ron Lim**. According to assistant editor **Mike Marts**, "The Metahumes acquire their powers from certain crystals from another planet which Darkhawk used to heal himself in his own series." When a mystery villain wants to acquire the crystals for his own evil ends, that's when the Metahumes leap into action! Spidey's in there, too, of course, as well as a few of his super-hero pals: Nova, Speedball, and Darkhawk! Mike says that SPIDER-MAN: FRIENDS & ENEMIES is "really cool!" Pick up a copy, and you can be one of Spidey's friends, too!

ITEM! There's been a real baby boom here at the House of Heroes lately, as our ultra-prolific creators have been working overtime to create the next generation of Marveloids! First up was **Chris Marrinan**, of NOVA fame, who, along with his wife, **Susan**, gave birth to a baby named **James Wesley**, on July 25. Next up was Executive Editor/Special Projects, **Bob Budiansky**, who launched a very special project with his wife, **Angela Goldman**, on August 18. **Little Emma Suzanne Budiansky** is hoping to receive her own trading card some day. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN writer **J.M. DeMatteis** and his wife, **Diane Epstein**, are the proud parents of **Katie Mehera**. J.M. is so proud of Katie, he's already thinking of having her cloned! Then there's SILVER SABLE artist **Gordon Purcell** and his wife **Debra**, who got their own little Wild Pack started with the birth of son **Jack** on September 19. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, **Andy Lanning** (of PUNISHER: YEAR ONE fame) and his wife, **Lynn**, were beginning **Rachel**: Year One. Congratulations to all the proud parents!

ITEM! First you were astonished — now get ready to be held in suspense as we release TALES OF SUSPENSE, the second of three graphic novels recalling the classic Marvel "double feature" books of the sixties. The new TOS one-shot, which has dazzling painted art by **Colin MacNeil**, teams up Captain America and Iron Man against an all-new foe! Writer **James Robinson** explained, "A new terrorist cadre called DANTE is formed, and they begin to unleash mayhem on the world!" Superspy Nick Fury contacts IM and Cap, who learn that DANTE plans to kill the president! This leads to a huge battle over our nation's capital! James said that the TOS one-shot has some continuity with the original series from the sixties, but new readers can enjoy it, too! The suspense begins this week at your local comic shop!

ITEM! A mysterious new Inhuman villain sends the Seeker to return Devlor to Attilan in issue #3 of our smash new hit FANTASTIC FORCE, on sale this week. "We hint that there may be more to Devlor than is readily apparent," confessed FANFORCE co-writer **Tom Brevoort**. "There's a reason these guys are interested in him. And when that reason comes out, it's gonna blow the lid off this title!" The artwork is by our artistic find from sunny Italy — **Dante Bastianoni** — and our American friend **Ralph Cabrera!**

NOW ON SALE

- **2099 UNLIMITED #7:** It's a mid-summer's knight-mare with the wacky **Hooligan!**
- **BEAUTY & THE BEAST #5:** Come on, Beast! Even Groo knows how to read! By Slate/Quarter/Valerio!
- **BEST OF MARVEL 1994 TPB:** The most pulse-pounding tales of the year!
- **CABLE DELUXE #19:** The Dark Ride ends here! Now it's time to pay the fare! By Loeb/Skroce/Sellers!
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA #435:** Cap and his new protege **Free Spirit** meet **King Cobra** and his protege! By Gruenwald/Hoover/Buiansdi!
- **DAREDEVIL #336:** It's deadly danger with the **Demolisher** and the **Devourer!** By Wright/Grindberg/Hudson!
- **DARKHAWK #47:** The secret of Darkhawk's disappearance is revealed! By Fingeroth/Smith/Akin!
- **DOCTOR WHO #219:** The first Doctor is slugged by man-eating slugs! By Briggs/Andrew!
- **FANTASTIC FORCE #3:** A big day for **Devlor** — it's his first day of school! By Brevoort & Kanterovich/Bastianoni/Cabrera!
- **FORCE WORKS #7:** It's the deadly hands of the **Mandarin!** By Abnett & Lanning/Taylor/Garcia!
- **NAMOR #58:** A Russian spy ring provokes the wrath of the **Abomination!** By Herding/Isherwood!
- **NFL PRO ACTION #3:** Go the whole nine yards with an all-new Spider-Man story! By Lackey/Gammill!
- **PROWLER #3 OF 4:** The **Vulture** decreses; the Nightcreeper will creep no more! By Potts/Reinhold!
- **PUNISHER: YEAR ONE #2 OF 4:** They killed Frank's family ... and Frank is next! By Abnett & Lanning/Eaglesham!
- **REN & STIMPY #26:** A surprise party for Ren? Don't even theink about it, man! By Butter/Kazaleh!
- **SNOW WHITE #1:** Reprinting the classic 1937 adaptation of the beloved movie!
- **SPIDER-MAN 2099 #27:** Her name is **Xina** — and there's nobody meaner! By David/St.Pierre!
- **SPIDER-MAN: FRIENDS & ENEMIES #1 OF 4:** Meet the **Metahumes!** By Fingeroth/Lim!
- **SPIDER-MAN MEGAZINE #4:** Featuring the original **X-Men** and **Morbius!**
- **TALES OF SUSPENSE #1:** **Iron Man** and **Captain America** in full painted glory! By Robinson/MacNeil!
- **UNCANNY X-MEN DELUXE #320:** The X-Men head to Israel to find **Legion!** By Lobdell/Cruz/Green!
- **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #120:** The "Web of Life" begins to unravel here! By Kavanagh/Butler/Emberlin!
- **X-MEN Ashcan:** An X-clusive look at what's coming up in all the X-books!
- **X-MEN SPECTACULAR: A MUTANT CALLED LEGION #1 OF 4:** The title says it all! By Claremont/Sienkiewicz & Cockrum/Wiacek!

WINNER TAKES HOLLYWOOD ... DOC SAMSON ANALYZES VENGEANCE ... NIGHT THRASHER ALONGSIDE THE BLACK PANTHER ... ROGUE GETS THE SOLO